

A critical and exegetical commentary on t  
226.6 G51c v.1

119058



Gloag, Paton James,  
Life Pacific College Alumni Library



# DATE DUE

MAR 12 1984			
MAR 18 1985			
MAR 18 1991			
APR 8 1991			
MAY 29 1991			
MAR 29 1992			
APR 24 1997			
APR 24 1997			

226.6

G51c

v. 1

Bible. N.T. Acts. English. 1870.

Gloag

A critical and exagetical commen-  
tary on the Acts of the apostles

LIFE Pacific College

Alumni Library

1100 West Covina Blvd.

San Dimas, CA 91773

DEMCO

2 11905

2475









A CRITICAL AND EXEGETICAL  
COMMENTARY

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES



*Limited Classical Reprint Library*

Klock & Klock Christian Bookstores  
257 GIBSON AVE. N.  
MINNEAPOLIS, MINN. 55411





A CRITICAL AND EXEGETICAL  
COMMENTARY

ON THE

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

BY

PATON J. GLOAG, D.D.

MINISTER OF BLANTYRE.

VOLUME I.

**Klock & Klock Christian Publishers**  
**2527 GIRARD AVE. N.**  
**MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55411**

Originally Published by

T. and T. Clark

1870

Copy from the library of Dr. Cyril Barber

Printed by Klock & Klock in the U.S.A.

1979 Reprint



6.6  
51c  
1  
**L.I.F.E. College Library**  
**1100 Glendale Blvd.**  
**Los Angeles, Calif. 90026**

## FOREWORD

Paton James Gloag (1823-1906), was a man of rare gifts and abilities. For forty-six years he pastored Presbyterian churches in Selkirkshire, Scotland, in 1889 was elected to the position of Moderator of the Church of Scotland, and in 1896 became interim professor of Biblical Criticism in the University of Aberdeen.

A scholar as well as a preacher, Paton Gloag began his ministerial studies at Edinburgh University. Owing mainly to the disruption of 1843, he left Edinburgh and completed his theological training at the University of St. Andrews.

Gloag distinguished himself as a student of the New Testament and, in many respects, was ahead of his time, for he used to good advantage the principles of textual comparison in his preaching. In addition, while a pastor, he wrote several commentaries on New Testament books and also some theological treatises. These include *A Treatise on the Assurance of Salvation* (1856), *The Resurrection* (1862), *Practical Christianity* (1866), *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (2 vols.; 1870), *Introduction to The Pauline Epistles* (1874), *A Commentary on the Epistle of James* (1883), *Introduction to the Catholic Epistles* (1887), *A Commentary on the Thessalonians* (1887), *Introduction to the Johannine Writings* (1891), and an *Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels* (1895).

Many honors came to Paton Gloag during his lifetime. In 1867 he received the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from the University of St. Andrews, and in 1899 the University of Aberdeen commemorated his fifty years in the ministry by awarding him their Doctor of Laws degree. In addition, in 1879, Dr. Gloag was invited to give the Baird Lectures on the subject of "The Messianic Prophecies."

Dr. Gloag's expository studies are his finest monument. In his treatment of the Book of Acts, he reveals his mastery of the subject matter, his practical, pastoral insights, and his ability to bridge the centuries with relevant application of biblical principles which are pertinent to the needs of the Church today.

Cyril J. Barber

023508





## P R E F A C E.

---



**T**HIS exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles has occupied the attention of the writer for several years. Being engaged in the pastoral oversight of a tolerably populous parish, he has of course been able to devote to it only a limited portion of time; but he has not ventured on its publication without a careful consultation of all the authorities, both English and German, within his reach.

The Acts of the Apostles is distinguished from the other books of the New Testament by this important peculiarity, that it comes much in contact with many well-known facts of the ancient world, and thus admits of many illustrations from external sources of information. The Epistles treat chiefly of Christian doctrine and practice, and for the most part can only be explained and illustrated by internal criticism and mutual comparison. The scene of the Gospel narratives, on the other hand, is almost wholly confined to the narrow limits of Palestine, and profane history can therefore afford very little assistance in their study. But the Acts of the Apostles touches at every point on the history of the world. Countries and cities renowned in ancient times were visited by Paul and his companions; and persons who played an important part in the history of the world have also their places in the history of the church.

St. Chrysostom complains that in his days the Acts of the Apostles was comparatively neglected; and the same com-

plaint would not be unwarrantable in the present day, when many are disposed to regard the Acts as of secondary importance compared with the Gospels and the Epistles. There appears to be no sufficient ground for such an opinion. The Acts of the Apostles may serve a different purpose from that of the rest of the New Testament, but is not on that account of inferior importance. It constitutes the continuation of the Gospels, and the necessary introduction to the Epistles. It contains the history of the development of the church—of the growth of those principles which Jesus Christ brought down from heaven and planted in the heart of humanity. It is the model of church history, and the compendium of the principles of church government. It contains notices of the lives of the holy apostles, and first martyrs and confessors; and without it we would be almost wholly ignorant of the history of Paul, the greatest of them all, the noblest and most influential of the children of men.

There are few works in our country which profess to be criticisms on the Acts of the Apostles. Alford and Wordsworth both treat of it in their Greek Testaments: the notes of the former are valuable for their conciseness and critical sagacity; whilst those of the latter are distinguished for their scholarship and patristic learning. The only purely critical work in this country, of which the author is aware, which treats separately of the Acts, is the Commentary by the Rev. William Humphry of Trinity College, Cambridge; a work certainly of great value in a philological point of view, but professedly of an elementary or introductory character, and without any minute treatment of the various and important discussions to which the Acts of the Apostles has given rise. In America there is the admirable Commentary of Dr. Hackett, decidedly the best work on the subject in the English language. The edition of it in this country, published by the Bunyan Society, is defective, and is rendered

in a great degree worthless by the omission of many of Dr. Hackett's most valuable critical observations. The translation of the text annexed to that edition is, however, of considerable value. The second part of the Acts, which recounts the missionary labours of Paul, has recently been fully discussed, and much learning and research have been brought to bear upon it. Two works are especially instructive, and deserve careful perusal—*The Life and Epistles of St. Paul* by Lewin, and the classical work on the same subject by Conybeare and Howson: in the former the historical connections of the Acts are chiefly stated, and in the latter its geographical relations. Neither of those works, however, professes to be a critical examination of the book itself.

In Germany, critical works on the Acts, or on detached portions of it, are very numerous. The works of Baur, especially his *Apostel Paulus*, the Commentary of Zeller, and other writings of the Tübingen school, are distinguished for their ability, and have called forth a multitude of learned treatises on the Acts. De Wette's Commentary is most valuable for its critical notes, its grammatical details, and its exegesis. The works of Lange, Lekebusch, Oertel, Olshausen, and Baumgarten, are highly to be commended, as exhibiting much of that profound scholarship which is the peculiar characteristic of German theologians. The Commentary of Lechler in Lange's *Bibelwerk* is one of great excellence, exhibiting at once the erudition of an accomplished scholar and the piety of a Christian. The third edition, recently published, is enriched with an enlarged introduction and many important additional remarks. But by far the most valuable work on the Acts, and that from which the author has derived greater assistance than from all other works put together, is Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*. This work cannot be too highly praised: it is the perfection of a Com-

mentary, at once full and concise, though unhappily somewhat tainted with rationalistic opinions. It is a matter of surprise that the Commentaries of this great man, perhaps the most eminent of living biblical critics, have never been translated into English. It would be a great boon to English theological students, who are unacquainted with German, if the enterprising publishers of the "Foreign Theological Library" would make them a part of their series.

Two noted books dealing with this subject have been published since this Commentary was written—Dr. Davidson's *Introduction to the New Testament*, and Renan's *Saint Paul*. The author has given these works his careful consideration, and has embraced in the body of the Commentary, or in notes, such references to them as appeared to him to be requisite. But he found that, with all their undoubted ability, they added but little to the elaborate criticisms of the German theologians. Dr. Davidson's book belongs to the Tübingen school, and the opinions adopted are similar to those of Baur and Zeller. It appears to the author that neither Renan's *Saint Paul*, nor his previous work, *Les Apôtres*, which deals in his wonderfully arbitrary manner with the earlier portion of the Acts, can be regarded as an important contribution to the literature of the subject, or is likely to take much hold on the English mind. Despite the remarkable charm of his style, and his unquestionable scholarship, he wants the critical acumen of Baur. His arbitrary conjectures, the unwarrantable theories which he builds on the slightest foundations, appear to the author to deprive his work of much substantial value, and give it the tone of a romance rather than a history. Plausible though he be, Renan is far from being a formidable antagonist of sound theology. These works proceed, however, from wholly different fundamental opinions from those which the author entertains, and on which he has based his Commentary.



A few words are necessary, in explanation of the method adopted in the composition of the present Commentary.

The translation is not from the *textus receptus*, but from the last (the seventh) edition of Tischendorf's *Novum Testamentum Græce*, now generally accepted as the best critical edition of the text. The Critical Notes contain the authority for the readings of Tischendorf, when they differ materially from the readings of the *textus receptus*. When the author has differed from Tischendorf with regard to the correct reading of any passage, he has stated his reasons for it in the Exegetical Remarks. The quotations in Greek in the Exegetical Remarks are from the text of Tischendorf, and not from the *textus receptus*.

The principal part of the Commentary consists of the Exegetical Remarks. The meaning of the text has been carefully examined; and all information which the author could gather from external sources has been brought to bear upon its elucidation. The apparent discrepancies between the Acts and other authorities—and, in short, all those difficulties which are started by Baur and De Wette—have been met, and never in a single instance wilfully omitted. The work, however, it is to be recollected, professes to be purely exegetical: the dogmatical aspects of the Acts have not been considered at all, nor has any attempt been made to draw practical inferences. The Commentary does not profess to be a contribution to dogmatic theology or practical religion.

Several discussions on various questions of more than usual importance or difficulty are treated of separately. These are generally inserted as appendices or notes to the sections in which the points discussed are specially adverted to. Various geographical notices in regard to the places mentioned in the Acts have not been thought wholly inappropriate to the present work, and it is to be hoped may be found to be of interest.

In conclusion, the author is anxious to say that it has been his special endeavour to avoid all theological intolerance, and to discuss the opinions of those from whom he differs most with candour and deference, not only from a sincere respect for the distinguished abilities and learning of the greater number of the authors whose opinions he has had occasion to consider, but especially because he believes himself to have been actuated solely by the desire to discover and express the truth, and to defend it by reason and not by passion; and he has attempted to form his judgment anew on all the points discussed with as little bias as possible from preconceived opinions. It is right, however, to say that his firm belief in the reality of miracles, and in the resurrection of Christ, renders his principles of interpretation diametrically opposed both to the Rationalism of Kuinœl, and to the mythical explanation of the Tübingen school.

BLANTYRE MANSE, 1870.

# CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION, . . . . .	1
1. The Authorship of the Acts, . . . . .	2
2. The Sources of Luke's Information, . . . . .	16
3. The Readers for whom the History was intended, . . . . .	21
4. The Design of the Acts, . . . . .	23
5. Time and Place of the Composition of the Acts, . . . . .	29
6. The Language and Text of the Acts, . . . . .	30
7. Arrangement of the Acts, . . . . .	33
8. Chronology of the Acts, . . . . .	34

## PART I.

### PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY IN JUDEA, AND ITS EXTENSION TO THE GENTILES.


SECTION 1. The Ascension—Ch. i. 1-12, . . . . .	39
„ 2. The Election of Matthias—Ch. i. 13-26, . . . . .	54
„ 3. The Miracle of Pentecost—Ch. ii. 1-13, . . . . .	68
On the Gift of Tongues, . . . . .	80
„ 4. The Discourse of Peter at Pentecost—Ch. ii. 14-36, . . . . .	91
On the Nature of Hades, . . . . .	105
„ 5. Effects of Peter's Discourse—Ch. ii. 37-47, . . . . .	108
„ 6. The First Miracle—Ch. iii. 1-26, . . . . .	120
„ 7. Peter and John before the Sanhedrim—Ch. iv. 1-22, . . . . .	138
On the Sanhedrim, . . . . .	152
„ 8. Prayer of the Church, and Community of Goods— Ch. iv. 23-37, . . . . .	155

	PAGE
SECTION 9. Internal Danger and External Progress of the Church	
—Ch. v. 1-16, . . . . .	169
„ 10. Second Arrest of the Apostles—Ch. v. 17-42, . . . . .	183
„ 11. The Election of the Seven—Ch. vi. 1-7, . . . . .	201
„ 12. Stephen before the Sanhedrim—Ch. vi. 8-15, . . . . .	213
On the Synagogues, . . . . .	224
„ 13. The Defence of Stephen—Ch. vii. 1-53, . . . . .	228
General Remarks on Stephen's Speech, . . . . .	255
„ 14. Martyrdom of Stephen—Ch. vii. 54-60, . . . . .	259
„ 15. Planting of the Church in Samaria—Ch. viii. 1-13, . . . . .	270
On Samaria, . . . . .	281
„ 16. Mission of Peter and John to Samaria—Ch. viii. 14-25, . . . . .	286
„ 17. Conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch—Ch. viii. 26-40, . . . . .	298
„ 18. Conversion of Paul—Ch. ix. 1-19, . . . . .	313
„ 19. Paul's Ministry at Damascus—Ch. ix. 19-30, . . . . .	331
„ 20. The Miracles of Peter—Ch. ix. 31-43, . . . . .	347
„ 21. Visions of Cornelius and Peter—Ch. x. 1-23, . . . . .	357
„ 22. Conversion of Cornelius—Ch. x. 23-48, . . . . .	372
„ 23. Peter's Apology—Ch. xi. 1-18, . . . . .	386
„ 24. The First Gentile Church—Ch. xi. 19-30, . . . . .	394
„ 25. Persecution by Herod—Ch. xii. 1-19, . . . . .	410
On James the Lord's Brother, . . . . .	422
„ 26. Death of Herod—Ch. xii. 19-25, . . . . .	430



## INTRODUCTION.

---

HE title, "The Acts of the Apostles" (πράξεις τῶν ἀποστόλων), would be readily suggested by the contents of the work. Πράξεις is the Greek term commonly employed for *res gestæ*: thus, πράξεις Κύρου, "the actions of Cyrus" (Xen. Cyr. i. 2, 16). Whether this title proceeded from the author himself is doubtful; but it is certainly very ancient, and occurs in the earliest notices of this book. The work is so called in the Muratorian Canon, and by Clemens Alexandrinus and Tertullian. There is some variation in the readings of the title in the different manuscripts. Four uncial manuscripts (A, E, G, and H) have πράξεις τῶν ἁγίων ἀποστόλων, the reading adopted by the *textus receptus*. The Codex Bezaë (D) has πράξεις ἀποστόλων. The Vatican ms. (B) has πράξεις ἀποστόλων, the reading adopted by Tischendorf, Lachmann, Bornemann, Meyer, Wordsworth, and Alford, as being the most simple, and probably the most ancient.

Several critics (De Wette, Ebrard) have challenged the appropriateness of this title as an indication of the contents and design of the work. It has been asserted that it is at once too narrow and too comprehensive: too narrow, as the work contains the actions of teachers who were not apostles, as the proto-martyr Stephen, and Philip the evangelist; and too comprehensive, as of the apostles only Peter and Paul are prominently brought forward; and John, James his brother, and James the son of Alphaeus (if indeed James, the Lord's brother, is to be regarded as the apostle of that name), are only incidentally mentioned. And yet it would

be difficult to invent a more appropriate title. Kuinœl supposes that *ἀπόστολοι* is employed in a wide sense, to denote the teachers of the Christian religion generally, even although they were not apostles strictly so called. But such a latitude of meaning is unnecessary ; for, as Meyer observes, the title sufficiently indicates the nature of the work. inasmuch as the development and diffusion of the Christian church—the general contents of the book—were effected chiefly by the apostles, particularly by Peter, the apostle of the circumcision, and by Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles.

### I. THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE ACTS.

The author is not named, but it is the almost universal opinion that this was Luke, the author of the third Gospel. The proofs of this are very strong, amounting almost to a demonstration. They may be arranged under two distinct heads: the testimony of the Christian Fathers, and the relation of the Acts to the third Gospel.

We have the explicit testimony of the Christian Fathers. The allusions to the Acts by the apostolic Fathers are not numerous, and are somewhat vague. Their extant writings are few, and they seldom refer directly to the books of Scripture. The most definite allusion is in the Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians (A.D. 108), where we find the words, “Whom God hath raised, having loosed the pains of death” (*ὃν ἔγειρεν ὁ Θεὸς λύσας τὰς ὠδινὰς τοῦ ἄδου*), a highly probable allusion to Acts ii. 24. The Acts was known to the author of the *Clementine Recognitions* (A.D. 175), as is evident from the nature of the references in that work to Simon Magus and Gamaliel.<sup>1</sup> The first direct quotation occurs in the Epistle of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne (A.D. 177), where we have these words: “They prayed for those who were so bitter in their hostility, like Stephen, that perfect martyr, ‘Lord, lay not this sin to their charge’” (Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* v. 2). The first Father, so far as is known, who mentions Luke as the author of the Acts, is Irenæus

<sup>1</sup> See Zeller's *Apostelgeschichte*, pp. 60–62.

(A.D. 178). "That Luke," he observes, "was inseparable from Paul, and his fellow-worker in the gospel, he himself shows; not indeed boasting of it, but impelled by truth itself. 'For,' he says, 'when Barnabas and John, who is surnamed Mark, separated from Paul, and had sailed to Cyprus, we came to Troas; and when Paul had seen in a dream a man of Macedonia, saying, Come over to Macedonia, and help us, immediately,' says he, 'we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them'" (*adv. Hær.* iii. 14, 1). The Muratorian Canon (A.D. 170<sup>1</sup>) also ascribes the Acts to Luke: "The acts of all the apostles are written in one book. Luke relates the events of which he was an eye-witness to Theophilus." Clemens Alexandrinus (A.D. 190) makes the same statement: "As Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles, records Paul to have said, 'Ye men of Athens, I perceive that ye are in all things too superstitious'" (*Stromata* v.). Tertullian (A.D. 200) frequently quotes the Acts, and once expressly ascribes its authorship to Luke (*de Jejuniis*, ch. x.). Origen (A.D. 230), commenting on the Epistle to the Hebrews, says: "Some suppose that it was written by Clement, who was Bishop of Rome, and others by Luke, who wrote the Gospel and the Acts" (Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* vi. 26). And Eusebius (A.D. 325) places the Acts among those books which were universally acknowledged; and as to its authorship he observes: "Luke, who was born at Antioch, and by profession a physician, being for the most part connected with Paul, and familiarly acquainted with the rest of the apostles, has left us two inspired books, the institutes of that spiritual healing which he obtained from them. One of these is his Gospel, in which he testifies that he has recorded as those who were from the beginning eye-witnesses and ministers of the word delivered to him; whom also, he says, he has in all things followed. The other is his Acts of the Apostles, which he composed not from what he had heard

<sup>1</sup> According to Tischendorf, the Muratorian Canon was written a little after the age of Pius I. (A.D. 142-157), about A.D. 170. See Westcott on the Canon, p. 186.

from others, but from what he had seen himself" (*Hist. Eccl.* iii. 4).<sup>1</sup>

This general testimony of the Christian Fathers was called in question by the early heretics, and that not on historical grounds, but from purely dogmatical reasons, because the contents of the Acts did not agree with their opinions. Thus the Ebionites rejected it, because it taught the reception of the Gentiles without circumcision into the Christian church; the Marcionites, for an opposite reason, because they could not endure its doctrine concerning the connection of Judaism and Christianity; the Severians, because their ascetic principles were incompatible with the teaching of Paul recorded in the Acts; and the Manichæans, on account of the history of the descent of the Holy Ghost.<sup>2</sup> Not until the time of Photius, in the ninth century, was any mention made of another author: "Some," he says, "believed the writer to be Clement of Rome, others Barnabas, and others Luke the evangelist,"—an assertion unsupported by the Christian Fathers, and which seems merely to be the arbitrary opinion of individuals. Photius himself concurred in the general opinion of the church as to the authorship of Luke. Chrysostom, in his homilies on the Acts, makes the strange statement, that "many Christians were unacquainted with the existence of the book, and with the name of the author" (*Hom.* i.),—a statement which is evidently a rhetorical exaggeration, because in his time this book was regularly read in the Greek Church between Easter and Whitsuntide. There might, however, have been circumstances which then led to the comparative neglect of the Acts, and to a preference being given to the Gospels and the Epistles.

Another and distinct line of argument is derived from the relation of the Acts to the third Gospel. The Acts professes

<sup>1</sup> See, for other testimonies from the Fathers, Lardner's Works; Davidson's *Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. ii. pp. 1-3; Westcott on the *Canon of the New Testament*, and similar works. To the above testimonies have also to be added the Syriac and Latin versions, which our best critics agree were made about the middle of the second century.

<sup>2</sup> Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 3.



to be written by the same author: it alludes to the Gospel as "the former treatise," and is addressed to Theophilus, the same person for whose special use the Gospel was written. This identity of authorship was never called in question by the early church; and in modern times biblical critics have shown that there is such an identity of diction and style as proves that both works must have proceeded from the same person. Dr. Davidson, in his *Introduction to the New Testament*, mentions no less than forty-seven terms which are peculiar to the writer, and which occur in both works, but nowhere else in the New Testament.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the statement that the Acts and the third Gospel are the composition of one author, has seldom, if ever, been called in question. Even De Wette observes: "It is certain that the writer is the author of the third Gospel, and his peculiarity of style remains the same in both works, and in the Acts of the Apostles from the beginning to the end."<sup>2</sup> And so also Zeller remarks: "If we combine all these arguments, referring to the language and construction of both writings, to their contents, their design, and their composition, we have every reason to credit the assertion of the Acts, and the universal testimony of tradition concerning the identity of the author with the writer of the Gospel."<sup>3</sup> Admitting this sameness of authorship, it follows that the whole series of testimonies which assert that the third Gospel was written by Luke, are also proofs that the Acts was written by the same person.

Now the testimonies asserting that Luke is the author of the Gospel which bears his name are strong and numerous. We have an apparent allusion to this Gospel in the First Epistle of Clemens Romanus to the Corinthians (A.D. 96);<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Davidson's *Introduction*, vol. ii. p. 8. See also Davidson's *New Introduction*, vol. ii. p. 268, and Zeller's *Apostelgeschichte*, pp. 414-425.

<sup>2</sup> De Wette's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Zeller's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 442.

<sup>4</sup> "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus: for He said, Woe to that man (by whom offences come)! It were better for him that he had not been born, than that he should offend one of my elect. It

and it is universally admitted that it was known to Marcion and Justin Martyr (A.D. 140). Luke is directly asserted to be the author of the third Gospel by Irenæus, Tertullian, Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, and Eusebius; indeed, Olshausen has good grounds for the assertion which he makes: "In the primitive church there was no opposition either to Luke's Gospel or to the Acts of the Apostles."<sup>1</sup>

In modern times, objections have been raised, not so much to Luke's being the author of the Acts, as to his being the companion of Paul and the eye-witness of those facts which he relates; and accordingly, those portions of the Acts which profess to be the testimony of an eye-witness, have been ascribed to others. The objections, however, are by no means formidable.

It has, for example, been objected that Luke is not mentioned in any of the epistles of Paul written during his missionary journeys. This indeed at first sight seems strange, but when carefully examined is easily accounted for. It does not appear that Luke (if the author of those portions of the Acts where the first person is used) was with Paul when he wrote these epistles. He was with Paul at Philippi (Acts xvi. 17), but he seems to have remained behind, because the personal and direct style of narrative is immediately dropped after Paul had left that city; and he appears not to have rejoined the apostle until seven years after, when the direct style is resumed on Paul's return to Macedonia (Acts xx. 5, 6). Now it was during these seven years that all these epistles, except the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, were written. Luke was not with Paul at Corinth (Acts xviii. 1), where the two Epistles to the Thessalonians were written; nor at Ephesus (Acts xix.), where the First Epistle to the Corinthians, and perhaps the Epistle to the Galatians, were written; nor, again, when Paul wintered at Corinth (Acts

were better for him that a mill-stone should be tied about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the sea, than that he should offend one of my little ones" (1 Clem. xlv.). Compare with this, Luke xvii. 2.

<sup>1</sup> Olshausen on the *Gospel and Acts*, vol. i. p. xli.

xx. 3), where the Epistle to the Romans was written.<sup>1</sup> There is, indeed, some probability that Luke was with Paul when the Second Epistle to the Corinthians was written from some place in Macedonia (2 Cor. ii. 13); and there is also a probability, as Neander after Jerome and Chrysostom supposes, that he is alluded to in that epistle as "the brother whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches" (2 Cor. viii. 18);<sup>2</sup> but be this as it may, the very indefiniteness of the above expression proves that distinguished fellow-labourers might be with Paul, and yet not be named by him in his epistles. It was by no means his practice to specify all those who were with him; and in two of his epistles, in that to the Galatians and in that to the Ephesians, no names are given.

Another objection is, that there is no mention of Luke in the Epistle to the Philippians. According to the Acts of the Apostles, the writer of the narrative, where the direct style is employed, was with Paul when he first preached the gospel in Philippi (Acts xvi. 16); and, as stated above, it would seem that he remained there for several years. It is also certain that the Epistle to the Philippians was written from Rome during Paul's imprisonment there (Phil. iv. 22); and we learn, both from the Acts and from other epistles of Paul, that Luke was with him in that city. Now, this being the case, if Luke were the writer of those portions of the Acts in which the pronoun "we" occurs, he stood in a peculiar relation to the church of Philippi, and therefore the omission of his name in an epistle to that church is considered as inexplicable. But in the Epistle to the Philippians there are no salutations sent: there is merely the general declaration, "The brethren which are with me salute you" (Phil. iv. 21); and the names of these brethren would be communicated to the Philippians by Epaphroditus, the bearer of the epistle.

<sup>1</sup> Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. ii. p. 2; Birk's *Horæ Apostolicæ*, p. 351.

<sup>2</sup> The subscription to this epistle declares that it was written from Philippi, a city of Macedonia, by Titus and Lucas. This proves that it was an ancient tradition that Luke was the companion of Titus on his mission to Corinth, although not mentioned in the body of the epistle.

Besides, although Luke was with Paul at Rome, yet it does not follow that he was always with him; and therefore it is not to be taken for granted that he was in his company when the Epistle to the Philippians was written. And that this omission of Luke is nothing the least strange, is evident from a similar instance in the case of Timothy. Timothy was the companion of Paul when he preached the gospel in Galatia, and planted the churches in that country (Acts xvi. 1-6); and yet in the Epistle to the Galatians there is no special mention of him: if with Paul when that epistle was written, he is merely included in the general phrase, "All the brethren which are with me" (Gal. i. 2).<sup>1</sup>

A third objection is, that the inferior position which Luke occupies in the epistles of Paul, is unfavourable to the supposition that he was for some time the companion of that apostle in his missionary journeys, and the narrator in the first person. "In the Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon," observes Mayerhoff, "which were written at an early period of Paul's imprisonment, Luke is mentioned in such a manner that we must conclude that he only then became acquainted with Paul. In the Epistle to Philemon he occupies the last place among Paul's fellow-labourers—first Epaphras, then Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, and last of all Lucas; and in the Epistle to the Colossians, the place before the last, for here Demas is put after him, who at all events only then became acquainted with Paul. Now, if Luke had actually been the companion of the apostle in his earlier journeys, his position not only after Timothy, who is honourably associated with Paul in the salutations at the commencement of both epistles, but after Tychicus, Onesimus, Marcus, Jesus surnamed Justus, and Epaphras, is unsuitable and surprising; whereas if Luke only became acquainted with the apostle at Rome, it is entirely natural, and he shares a similar position with Demas, with whom he appears to stand in the same relation to the apostle."<sup>2</sup> But such reasoning is singularly weak. There is no proof that Paul in his

<sup>1</sup> See Davidson's *Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. ii. pp. 11, 12.

<sup>2</sup> Mayerhoff, *Einkleitung in die petrinischen Schriften*, pp. 11, 12.



epistles arranged his fellow-workers in accordance with the length of his acquaintance with them. The manner in which Luke is alluded to in the Epistle to the Colossians, as "Luke the beloved physician," renders it probable that Paul had experienced his worth after a friendship of some standing. And the mention of persons in the epistles is a presumption that they were not altogether unknown to the churches to whom the epistles were written, and that consequently they were most probably Paul's fellow-travellers in his missionary journeys when he visited these churches.

Chiefly for these reasons, the Acts of the Apostles, or at least those portions of it which profess to come from an eye-witness, have been assigned by modern critics to other persons besides Luke. The person who is most frequently brought forward as the writer of at least a considerable portion of the Acts is Timothy. It has been supposed that all those parts where the author speaks of himself as present were written by Timothy. This was the opinion advanced by Schleiermacher, Ulrich, and Bleek. It is also supported by so distinguished a critic as De Wette. According to him, the author of the Acts, from ch. xvi. 10 and onwards, used a journal written by Timothy, and allowed the first personal pronoun to remain.<sup>1</sup> The chief reason for this supposition is, that everywhere when Timothy is present the narrative is distinguished by a copiousness of detail, but that this ceases when Timothy is absent. This, however, is erroneous: Timothy was with Paul when he planted the gospel in Galatia, and yet the account of this is omitted in the narrative (Acts xvi. 6); and he was absent when Paul was at Athens (Acts xvii. 15, 16), and at Ephesus when the tumult occasioned by Demetrius and the craftsmen occurred (Acts xix. 22), and yet in both instances the narrative is minute.

This hypothesis of the authorship of Timothy is at variance with the acknowledged accuracy of style of the writer of the Acts; that in one part of a document, supposed to be written by Timothy, he should leave the first personal pronoun "we" unaltered (Acts xvi. 16, xx. 5), and in another part of the

<sup>1</sup> De Wette's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 10.

same document should alter it into the third pronoun "they," or insert the name Timothy (Acts xvii. 14, xviii. 5, xix. 22). The only answer that has been given to this objection is, that the writer or compiler of the Acts, through carelessness, sometimes left the "we" of the original document unchanged, —a carelessness which, as Meyer observes, is something unparalleled, and even monstrous.<sup>1</sup> Besides, the authorship of Timothy is inconsistent with the book itself. In Acts xx. 4, 5 we read, "And there accompanied him into Asia, Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. These, going before, tarried for us at Troas;" where it is evident that the persons named, among whom was Timothy, who went before, are different from the narrator, who remained behind with the apostle. To remove this objection, Ulrich proposes to read the passage thus: "There accompanied him into Asia, Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus" (where, in the original document, ἐγὼ stood). Here a full stop is supposed, and then follows: "But the Asiatics, Tychicus and Trophimus, these (namely, the Asiatics) going before, tarried for us at Troas." The catalogue of Paul's companions is thus divided into two parts—those who accompanied him, and those who went before; and by this method Timothy is included among the "we" party who accompanied Paul. But such a construction is unnatural, if not inadmissible, and is, as Schwanbeck observes, an evident makeshift, to avoid a difficulty arising from the plain sense of the passage.<sup>2</sup>

Mayerhoff goes further, and supposes that the whole of the Acts as well as the third Gospel was written by Timothy, and that Luke acted only in the capacity of a transcriber. "The part of Luke," he observes, "both in the Gospel and

<sup>1</sup> So also Renan observes: "Such an error might only exist in a most careless compilation; but the third Gospel and the Acts form a work very well prepared, composed with reflection, and even with art; written by the same hand, and on a connected plan."

<sup>2</sup> Schwanbeck's *Quellen der Apostelgeschichte*, pp. 161, 162.



in the Acts of the Apostles, is entirely subordinate—that of a transcriber of the works composed by Timothy; and it is only a later tradition which made Luke what he never was in reality,—an attendant on Paul in his journeys, and the author of the Acts as well as of the Gospel.”<sup>1</sup> This opinion accounts for the similarity of style pervading these two books, and which forms a difficulty in the way of the other hypothesis. But it is exposed to all the objections already brought forward to the partial authorship of Timothy; and, besides, is encumbered with its own peculiar difficulties. No reason can be assigned, if Timothy were the author of the Acts and the third Gospel, why these works have been ascribed to the unknown Luke in preference to one so well known as Timothy. Besides, this opinion is opposed to the manner in which Timothy is for the first time mentioned as “one who was well reported of by the brethren” (Acts xvi. 2): the author would hardly have thus written of himself to Theophilus.

Another person supposed to be the author of a considerable portion of the Acts is Silas. This opinion has been adopted and defended by Schwanbeck. He supposes that from ch. xv. 13 and onwards was written by Silas; and that this document was inserted by Luke, as the general editor, in his work, with a few trifling alterations.<sup>2</sup> The chief reason assigned for this is the minuteness with which the transactions at the Council of Jerusalem are recorded, as if the account was the report of an eye-witness. This hypothesis is wholly unsupported by external testimony, and is entirely founded on arbitrary assumption. The same objection, arising from the arbitrary change from the first to the third personal pronoun, which was brought against the authorship of Timothy, applies here with equal force. Besides, this opinion is opposed to the manner in which Silas is introduced to the readers of the book along with Judas Barsabas, as “chief men among the brethren” (Acts xv. 22). The only answer that Schwanbeck gives to this objection is, that this notice was either an insertion by the

<sup>1</sup> Mayerhoff's *Einleitung in die petrinischen Schriften*, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Schwanbeck's *Quellen der Apostelgeschichte*, pp. 168–186.

editor, or, what is more probable, that it referred only to Judas, but was extended by the editor to Silas.<sup>1</sup> Such arbitrary conjectures cannot possibly be encountered by argument.

A fourth hypothesis, advanced by Hennel, is that Luke and Silas are the same person. "There is reason," he observes, "to conjecture that Luke and Silas are one person. The pronoun 'we' occurs in the narrative for the first time in ch. xvi. 10, 'We endeavoured to go into Macedonia.' The only companions of Paul at that time were Silas and Timothy (ch. xv. 40, xvi. 3, 4, 6). Accordingly, one of these three wrote the Acts of the Apostles. But it is evident from ch. xx. 4, 13, that neither Paul nor Timothy wrote it. Silas therefore was the author. Wherever the pronoun 'we' occurs, there is no reason against the opinion that Silas was of the company. The name Silas or Silvanus has nearly the same import as Lucas or Lucanus,—the one being derived from *silva*, a wood, and the other from *lucus*, a grove; both being only Latinized forms from the original Greek or Hebrew name of the author."<sup>2</sup> Hence it is inferred that Luke, to whom the early Fathers assigned the authorship of Acts, is the same as Silas, who from internal evidence appears to have been its author. These arguments, however, have little force. The hypothesis is exposed to all the arguments already adduced against the partial authorship of Silas. In the epistles of Paul, Silas and Luke are both mentioned as if they were different persons,—there being not the slightest intimation given us of their identity. No argument can be based on the supposed similarity of names. The identity of Cephas and Peter, both signifying a rock, is not parallel, as these names do not signify similar things, but precisely the same thing; and besides, they are from different languages, the one being Hebrew and the other Greek—not like *lucus* and *silva*, words of the same language. A man may translate his name from one language to another, as was done by the French refugees after the revocation of the edict of Nantes, who, when they came to England,

<sup>1</sup> Schwanbeck's *Quellen*, pp. 173, 174.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 170.

translated their names into English; but it is very far-fetched to argue that cognate names in the same language, as "Grove" and "Wood," probably belong to the same person.

We do not at present enter upon a consideration of the credibility of the Acts as an authentic history, because the examination of particular points will naturally occur in the course of our exposition. We would only observe that there are two distinct lines of argument which demonstrate the trustworthiness of the book. First, the agreement which exists between the Acts and the epistles of Paul is of such a nature as to prove them to have been independently written; and thus they mutually corroborate each other. This line of argument has been carried out by Paley in his masterly work the *Horæ Paulinæ*. Examples of such undesigned coincidences will be given in their proper place.

A second proof of the credibility of the history is the agreement of the narrative of the Acts with information derived from other sources. This agreement embraces many particulars. The historical transactions recorded in the Acts are in accordance with the information given us by such independent writers as Josephus, Tacitus, and Suetonius. The statements with regard to the governors of particular countries, and the political condition of particular cities, are corroborated by coins which have come down to us.<sup>1</sup> And the topography of the places mentioned in the account of the missionary journeys of Paul corresponds both with ancient geography as given by Strabo, and with the investigations of modern travellers. Frequently this agreement extends to minute particulars, and is of a complicated nature, such as could not possibly have occurred in the work of a forger. We shall have frequent occasion to notice instances of such agreement in the course of our exposition.

According to the views of De Wette, the second part of the Acts, where the author depended on his own observation and on his intercourse with Paul, is much more credible

<sup>1</sup> The reader is here specially referred to Akerman's *Numismatic Illustrations of the New Testament*.

than the first part, which is drawn chiefly from traditional accounts. In the first part, he observes, there are "inexplicable difficulties, exaggerations, incorrect statements, doubtful facts, unsatisfactory information, and traces of ignorance with Jewish history and customs."<sup>1</sup> But when he adduces proofs of such an assertion, they are found to be for the most part irrelevant, or difficulties which, when carefully examined, admit of explanation. The instances brought forward of apparent contradictions and misstatements will all be examined in their proper place.

Baur, Zeller, Köstlin, Hilgenfeld, Schrader, and other writers of the Tübingen school, go much further. They have attempted to transfer to the Acts the mythical character which Strauss has assigned to the Gospels. Baur supposes that it was written toward the middle of the second century, and that it is not a purely historical work, but a conciliatory treatise by a disciple of Paul, with a view to reconcile the opinions of that apostle with those of Peter and the other original apostles. So also Zeller observes: "The Acts is the work of a Pauline of the Romish church: the time of its composition may most probably be fixed between the years 110 and 125, or even 130, after Christ."<sup>2</sup> Hence the historical truth in it is but small; and the miracles recorded are to be accounted for not from natural causes, but either as the inventions of the writer or as mythical tales. Such an attempt of extreme criticism never received much support in Germany; and in all probability it would have been forgotten, had it not been for the distinguished ability and learning of its two great promoters and defenders, Baur and Zeller. It seems to have arisen entirely from the views of the school regarding the impossibility of miracles; and as the natural solution of miracles had failed, they endeavoured to substitute their mythical hypothesis. We shall revert to this subject when we consider "the design of the Acts."

We have little information concerning Luke himself, the author of the Acts. His name Lucas is a contraction for

<sup>1</sup> De Wette's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Zeller's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 488.



Lucanus, but is not to be confounded with Lucius (Acts xiii. 1; Rom. xvi. 21). He is thrice mentioned by Paul in his epistles. In the Epistle to the Colossians he is described as Luke "the beloved physician" (Col. iv. 14); in the Epistle to Philemon he sends his salutations with others of Paul's fellow-labourers (ver. 24); and in the Second Epistle to Timothy he is mentioned as being with the apostle when he stood before Cæsar (2 Tim. iv. 11). Nothing is known of his native place. Eusebius informs us that he was a native of Antioch (*Hist. Eccl.* iii. 6), but this may arise from confounding him with Lucius of Cyrene (Acts xiii. 1); others fix on Troas as his native city, where he first joined the apostle; and others on Philippi, where he seems to have resided for several years. We learn from Col. iv. 14 that he was a physician; and Michaelis and others affirm that there are evidences of this in his writings, from the precise and exact manner in which he alludes to diseases.<sup>1</sup> Grotius supposes that he was originally a slave, because among the Romans physicians were frequently slaves; but there is no ground for this opinion, as physicians were not necessarily slaves, and as, on the contrary, among the Greeks the profession was highly esteemed, and practised by men of liberal education. The tradition that he was a painter rests on the authority of Nicephorus of the fourteenth century, and is entitled to no credit (*Hist. Eccl.* ii. 43). From a statement made by Paul (compare Col. iv. 11 with ver. 14), it is with considerable probability inferred that he was a Gentile by birth. The purity of his Greek, and the comparative absence of Hebraisms, are in favour of his Gentile origin; though this may also be accounted for on the supposition of his being a Hellenistic Jew. Indeed, his acquaintance with the Septuagint, his familiarity with Jewish customs, and the occasional Hebraisms which occur in his writings, render the statement of Jerome somewhat probable, that he was a proselyte to Judaism before his conversion to Christianity. The statement of Epiphanius, that he was one of the seventy disciples, is refuted by the testimony of Luke himself in the

<sup>1</sup> Marsh's *Michaelis*, vol. iv. pp. 229, 230.

Gospel, where by implication he says that he was not an eyewitness and minister of the word (Luke i. 1, 2).

We know nothing of the personal history of Luke beyond what is told us in the Acts. He was already a Christian when he joined Paul at Troas, but by whom converted is unknown. He accompanied Paul to Philippi, where he remained some years. Afterwards he rejoined the apostle on his return to Macedonia, and accompanied him, probably as one of the messengers of the churches, on his last journey to Jerusalem. He sailed with him from Cæsarea to Rome, and was in his company when he wrote certain of his epistles from that city. The subsequent history of Luke is involved in obscurity. According to Epiphanius, he preached the Gospel in Gallia, Italy, Dalmatia, and Macedonia; Gregory Nazianzen reckons him among the martyrs; and according to Nicephorus, he returned to Greece, where he suffered martyrdom.

## II. THE SOURCES OF LUKE'S INFORMATION.

The Acts of the Apostles bears evidence of being the composition of one person. The peculiar diction and similarity of style which pervade it throughout are considered by the most distinguished biblical scholars to be sufficient proofs of this. Dr. Davidson enumerates forty terms and expressions peculiar to the writer, which are not confined to one part of the book, but pervade it throughout, besides numerous favourite phrases occurring in all parts of the work.<sup>1</sup> This similarity is of such a nature as to prove that, if the author employed written documents, he did not incorporate them mechanically into his book unchanged, or with only slight alterations; but he so altered them as to impress upon them the peculiarities of his own style, and to pervade them with his own spirit. And yet, on the other hand, this similarity does not exclude a certain deviation of style per-

<sup>1</sup> Davidson's *Introduction*, vol. ii. pp. 4-6; Davidson's *New Introduction*, vol. ii. pp. 261-265; Zeller's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 388; Lekebusch's *Apostelgeschichte*, pp. 37-79.



ceptible in different portions of the book, as will be afterwards observed; a deviation, however, not at variance with the fact that there was only one author. In short, the Acts is not the work of a mere annalist or compiler, but of a highly characteristic historian, one whose style is as marked and peculiar as the style of any of the other writers of the New Testament. Moreover, in the book itself there are numerous references to what has been already said, and which go to prove the unity of the work. The following is a list of them as given by De Wette: xi. 16, compare i. 5; xi. 19, compare viii. 1; xii. 25, compare xi. 30; xv. 8, compare xi. 47; xv. 58, compare xiii. 13; xvi. 4, compare xv. 23; xviii. 5, compare xvii. 15; xix. 1, compare xviii. 23; xxi. 8, compare vi. 5; xxi. 29, compare xx. 4; xxii. 20, compare vii. 58.<sup>1</sup>

It is an interesting matter of inquiry, What were the sources of Luke's information? Whence did he obtain the materials out of which he formed his history? It is evident from the work itself that he was only an eye-witness of a small portion of the transactions which he relates. He joined the apostle on his second missionary journey, and then appears to have been separated from him for several years, and afterwards accompanied him on his third missionary journey to Jerusalem; consequently he must have received at second hand the whole of the first portion of the Acts, and much of the second. In what manner, then, from whose testimony, or from what documents, was his history composed?

The sources of Luke's information may be considered as threefold: personal observation, oral testimony, and perhaps written documents.

The first and most direct source of information was personal observation. Luke was the companion of Paul during a part of his travels, and was an eye-witness of several of the transactions which he relates. He was with Paul during his first visit to Philippi, he accompanied him on his last journey to Jerusalem, and sailed with him to Rome. In all proba-

<sup>1</sup> De Wette's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 10. See also Davidson's *New Introduction*, vol. ii. pp. 265-267; Zeller's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 403.

bility he was present at Jerusalem when the apostle was arrested; and it is also likely that he was at Cæsarea during a portion of the two years of the apostle's imprisonment in that city, for it was from Cæsarea that he embarked with him to Rome. The account of the voyage to Rome bears indubitable marks of being written by one who was present.<sup>1</sup> Thus, then, the information contained in ch. xvi. 8–40, xx., xxi., xxvii., and xxviii., and perhaps also in ch. xxii.–xxvi., was derived from direct observation.

The second source of information is that derived from the testimony of others. Now here Luke would be chiefly indebted to Paul himself. From his own mouth he would learn the account of that apostle's conversion and missionary journeys, so that the information contained in the whole of the second part of the Acts (ch. xiii.–xxviii.) may be accounted for without having recourse to the supposition of written sources. When in Judea, where he probably resided during the two years of Paul's imprisonment at Cæsarea, he would procure information from James and the church of Jerusalem: from them he might derive his accounts of the ascension, the miracle of Pentecost, the acts of Peter, the dispute between the Hellenists and the Hebrews, the martyrdom of Stephen and of the Apostle James. And there is also the information which he would obtain from the church of Cæsarea: in that city he met with Philip the evangelist (Acts xxi. 8), and perhaps also with Cornelius the devout centurion. From this source he would derive his information concerning the evangelistic labours in Samaria, the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch, the visions made to Peter and Cornelius, and the particulars connected with the death of Herod Agrippa I. Schneckenburger lays great stress on Luke's acquaintance with Philip at Cæsarea; and, indeed, it is highly probable that much of his information was derived from him. Thus, then, by far the greater portion, if not the whole of the first part of the Acts, would be obtained from those who were directly connected with the transactions

<sup>1</sup> The reader is here referred to the interesting work of the late James Smith, Esq. of Jordanhill, *On the Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul*.

recorded, "who were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word."

The third source of information mentioned is written documents. It is indeed questioned whether there were any such used by Luke in his composition of the Acts. So far as we can see, the accounts contained in it might be obtained from the direct testimony of the eye-witnesses themselves; and if so, it is more probable that Luke would derive his information from this quarter than from any written sources. On the other hand, most biblical critics interpret the introduction to Luke's Gospel as a declaration on the part of the author that he availed himself of written documents in preparing that work: *καθὼς παρέδωκαν ἡμῖν οἱ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς αὐτόπται καὶ ὑπηρέται γερόμενοι τοῦ λόγου*.<sup>1</sup> If, then, it is argued he employed written documents in the composition of his Gospel, the probability is that he also employed them in the composition of his history of the apostles. Besides, it is a remarkable fact, that although the style of the Acts is substantially the same throughout, yet there is a greater number of Hebraisms in the first part, where he depended on information at second hand, than in the second part, where he was indebted to his own observation.

Some critics go the length of asserting that the whole of the Acts is a mere mechanical compilation. Thus Schwanbeck affirms that the Acts is composed of the four following documents: first, a biography of Peter; secondly, a rhetorical account of the death of Stephen; thirdly, a biography of Barnabas; and fourthly, the memoirs of Silas. He further affirms that Luke was a mere compiler, and did not reproduce the contents of these sources in a free manner, and incorporate them in a whole, but only attached single portions of the different writings to each other, and that for the most part unchanged.<sup>2</sup> The similarity of style throughout confutes such a supposition. If written documents were

<sup>1</sup> These words, however, do not necessarily affirm that Luke employed written documents, but may merely mean that he received his information from those who were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word.

<sup>2</sup> Schwanbeck's *Quellen der Apostelgeschichte*, p. 253.

employed, which is in itself doubtful, they are so freely inserted and used, that all attempts to distinguish the separate writings are unavailing. The letter of the Council of Jerusalem, being an official document, is perhaps inserted *verbatim* (Acts xv. 23-29). Probably the same was also the case with the official communication of Claudius Lysias to Felix (Acts xxiii. 26-30). Both these short documents have internal marks of originality. Some also suppose that the early church possessed a written account of the speech of Stephen, their first martyr, which Luke freely used and inserted in his narrative. Others (Bleek, Meyer, Olshausen) think that the narrative of Paul's first missionary journey, in company with Barnabas (ch. xiii. xiv.), may have been a report drawn up by the missionaries themselves. But this is improbable, as ch. xiii. 1 is connected with ch. xii. 25 and xi. 19-21; and ch. xiii. 13 is connected with ch. xv. 37, 38. Besides, Luke might easily have derived his information from the personal communications of Paul, so that he was under no necessity to have recourse to a written source.

The remarks made regarding the sources of Luke's information, apply of course to the discourses which he has inserted in his history: these were either heard by himself, told by ear-witnesses, or were perhaps derived from written documents. It is not, however, to be supposed that all the discourses are given in the precise words in which they were delivered. With some of them this was impossible, because they were spoken in the Aramaic language, as Paul's defence before the Jews (Acts xxii. 2), and probably also Peter's discourse on the day of Pentecost, and Stephen's apology before the Sanhedrim. In the case of others, Luke has impressed on them his own style and diction. Still, however, it must not be supposed that they were composed by Luke: they bear internal marks of being the discourses of those to whom they are ascribed. Learned critics have shown that, in the discourses of Peter and Paul in particular, there are not only the sentiments peculiar to these apostles, but often their favourite phraseology. Thus, as Alford remarks, in the discourse to the Ephesian elders, there is a



rich storehouse of phrases and sentiments peculiar to Paul.<sup>1</sup> Instances of such internal marks of genuineness in the discourses will occur in the course of the exposition. It is also a matter of dispute whether the discourses are given in their fulness, or whether we have in general mere abbreviations containing their substance and spirit. Certainly the speech of Tertullus, and the answer of Paul in the trial of the apostle before Felix, look like abbreviations. But, on the other hand, some of Paul's discourses, as his address to the Athenians, and his defence before Agrippa, are so full and graphic, that it is probable they are given us entire.

The Acts of the Apostles appears to have been begun in the form of a diary kept by the author. The journey of Paul from Macedonia, to his arrival in Jerusalem, is given with great minuteness: the references to time are definite, and almost every day is marked by the events which happened on it; so that it would seem as if a regular diary were kept. And the same remark is true with regard to the voyage from Cæsarea to Rome: there is in the narrative the same preciseness with regard to time, and the same minuteness of detail. Afterwards this journal would be increased by Luke's own personal knowledge of what formerly happened when he first joined the apostle at Troas, and by information received at second hand. This may account for the peculiar character of the work, giving first the general annals of the church, and then dwelling almost exclusively on the personal labours of the Apostle Paul.<sup>2</sup>

### III. THE READERS FOR WHOM THE HISTORY WAS INTENDED.

The Acts of the Apostles, as well as the third Gospel, was addressed to Theophilus, who, from the epithet *κράτιστε*, *most noble*, being applied to him, was probably a Greek Christian of rank.<sup>3</sup> Kuinoel, Heinrichs, and others, suppose

<sup>1</sup> Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. ii. pp. 13–15.

<sup>2</sup> See this opinion stated and illustrated by Alford in his *Greek Testament*, vol. ii. pp. 8–15.

<sup>3</sup> See note to Acts i. 1.

that it was written for the use of this individual, and that the sole design of the author was to impart to him information concerning the diffusion of the gospel. So also Meyer remarks that the work was primarily a private composition written for Theophilus, and that its design was similar to that of the Gospel—namely, to impart to him accurate information concerning Christianity, in order to confirm him in the faith; and that it was partly the wants of Theophilus, and partly Luke's sources of information, that guided the author in the choice of materials for his history.<sup>1</sup> But this is a partial and meagre view of the subject. Luke, in inscribing his work to Theophilus, probably merely followed the practice of dedicating his book to some person of rank and influence.

We are led to believe that Luke wrote his history for the instruction of Christians in general: his object was to preserve the memorials of the apostles for the good of the church. It may be the case that it was designed primarily for the use of the Gentile Christians, of which class Theophilus may be considered as the representative; but not to the exclusion of the Jewish Christians. Its being written in Greek, and not in Hebrew, is no reason for supposing that it was not intended for the use of the Jewish Christians, because the Jews had adopted the language of the countries where they resided; and even in Palestine, it would seem that Greek was then generally understood. The Epistle to the Hebrews, addressed primarily to the Jewish Christians, and in all likelihood to those resident in Judea, was written in Greek, and indeed there is no record of its ever being translated into Hebrew.

It may be asked, In what sense is it affirmed that the Acts, being addressed to no particular church, but to an individual, was intended for the Christian church at large? One understands for what publicity the epistles of Paul were intended, being addressed to Christian communities; but how was it meant that the Gospels and the Acts should be published? But we think that the fact that these works

<sup>1</sup> Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 8.



were disseminated, is in itself a proof that their publication was the intention of their authors: for, on the supposition of their being mere private writings, their after diffusion is unaccountable, or at least would be extremely unlikely. As to the mode of publication in the absence of printing, we are comparatively ignorant; but the same ignorance applies to all the works of the ancients. In all probability, copies of these works were made by zealous Christians, and distributed among the different churches, and would be gradually multiplied.

#### IV. THE DESIGN OF THE ACTS.

In considering the design of the Acts, we must attend to the statements of the author himself in the preface to his Gospel; because the design of the Acts must be similar to that of the Gospel, inasmuch as the author represents it as the second part (*δεύτερος λόγος*) of his former work. Now, in the Gospel, Luke affirms that his design in writing was "to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among Christians, in order that they might know the certainty of those things wherein they had been instructed" (Luke i. 1, 4): in other words, to give an account of the life of Jesus for the information and use of Christians. And in conformity with this, in his preface to the Acts, he describes his former treatise, or the Gospel, as an account "of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach" (Acts i. 1). Hence, then, it would seem that the Acts was designed to be a continuation of the same work which Jesus began, carried on by His apostles—a record of the teaching and actions of the apostles; so that its title, "The Acts of the Apostles," is by no means inappropriate. The Acts, then, is a history of the progress of the religion of Christ for the instruction of Christians; or, as it is otherwise described, "a history of the progress of the Christian church from Jerusalem to Rome:" so approximately Lardner, Mayerhoff, Lekebusch, Ewald, Hackett, Alford. There is no part of the book where any such design is formally stated, unless it is to be found in that statement of our Lord to His disciples:

“Ye shall be witnesses to me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts i. 8).

To this view of the subject, it is objected that this is to confound the contents of the book with the design which the author had in writing it. But in historical works, the contents are often the design: the simple record of events may be what Luke intended; or if a subjective motive be required, the instruction of Christians is sufficient. Again, it is objected that this does not account for the omissions in the book. Nothing is related of the acts of most of the apostles, the narrative concerning Peter breaks off abruptly, and even the history of Paul is defective: we are not informed of his three years’ residence in Arabia, of his dispute with Peter at Antioch, of his preaching the gospel in Galatia, and of the result of his Roman imprisonment; and from 2 Cor. xi. 24, 25, it would appear that only a few of his trials and sufferings are described.<sup>1</sup> But it is evident that Luke could not write everything that occurred, otherwise his work would exceed all bounds. We may not indeed be able to affirm in all cases on what principle he made his selection; but we may trace an order in his narrative—a record of the gradual development of Christianity. At first, the church is almost entirely confined to Jerusalem and its neighbourhood; then, after the dispersion, by reason of the persecution which followed the death of Stephen, it extends to Samaria and the adjoining provinces; then Cornelius is converted, and the Gentiles are received into the Christian church; then missionary efforts commence at Antioch; then Paul and his companions propagate the gospel in Asia, and carry it over to Europe, until at length it is established in Rome, the capital of the civilised world.

Various other designs have been attributed to Luke. We have already alluded to the meagre view of Kuinœl, that the Acts was written simply to afford information to Theophilus. Grotius supposes that the Acts is a biography of Peter and Paul. And certainly it is so far true that these

<sup>1</sup> Kuinœl’s *Novi Testamenti Libri Historici*, vol. iii. p. 6.

two apostles occupy a prominent place in the history: Peter is the leading person in the first part, and Paul in the second part of the Acts; but this was the case because it was chiefly through their instrumentality that Christianity was propagated. The design of the work is much wider than to give a mere biography of individuals: it relates their actions only when these have reference to the general history of the church, but it omits those private incidents which were not followed by any public consequences. By considering the Acts as a history, and not a biography, we may account for many omissions in the life of Paul. Thus, for example, his three years' residence in Arabia is passed over, because it formed no part of his missionary labours.

Others more in accordance with their preconceived opinions, or with the opinions peculiar to later times, than with anything found in the work itself, have ascribed apologetic or conciliatory designs to Luke. Michaelis supposes that Luke had a twofold object in the composition of his work: first, to relate in what manner the gifts of the Holy Spirit were communicated on the day of Pentecost, and the subsequent miracles performed by the apostles, by which the truth of Christianity was confirmed; secondly, to deliver such accounts as proved the claim of the Gentiles to admission into the church of Christ,—a claim disputed by the Jews, especially at the time when Luke wrote the Acts of the Apostles.<sup>1</sup> So also Griesbach thinks that the Acts is a justification of Paul concerning the reception of the Gentiles into the church. Similar is the view taken by Paulus: he supposes the Acts to be the justification of the Pauline doctrine of the universality of Christianity.<sup>2</sup> But such opinions convert an inference deducible from the work into the design. No doubt the Acts teaches the reception of the Gentiles into the Christian church, and their equality with the Jews; but that this was not the sole design of the work, is evident from its contents.

Schneckenburger proceeds further: he carries out the idea

<sup>1</sup> Michaelis' *Introduction to the New Testament*, translated by Marsh, vol. iv. p. 330.

<sup>2</sup> See Lekebusch's *Apostelgeschichte*, pp. 235, 236.

suggested by Griesbach, and assigns to the Acts a purely apologetic design. He supposes it to be a defence of Paul against the attacks of Judaizing Christians. With this object in view, the author attempts to prove the perfect similarity between Peter and Paul, by making Peter act as Paul would do, as when he preached the gospel to Cornelius; and by making Paul act as Peter would do, as when he took on himself the vow of the Nazarites. So also the two parts into which the Acts are divided are made to correspond: in the first part the actions of Peter are given, and in the second part the actions of Paul; and between the actions of these two apostles there is a striking coincidence. In short, the parallelism between Peter and Paul pervades the whole book, the discourses as well as the narratives, and accounts both for the reception and the omission of incidents. Thus, for example, the dispute between Peter and Paul at Antioch, and the refusal of Paul to circumcise Titus, are omitted, as these incidents are opposed to the design of the author.<sup>1</sup> It is, however, to be observed that Schneckenburger does not call in question the historical credibility of the Acts; on the contrary, he repeatedly maintains it against its opponents. But what he asserts is, that the justification of Paul was the principle which guided Luke in his selection of the mass of materials before him; so that the Acts is not so much a history as an apology.

Baur, to whose opinion we have already alluded, carries out the theory of Schneckenburger to what we must say appears to be its legitimate consequences. According to the view of Schneckenburger, a one-sided representation is given of Paul: important facts are omitted or unhistorically stated, and the speeches inserted do not agree with the peculiar doctrine of Paul; and thus historical truth is sacrificed. Paul is converted into a Petrine Christian, and Peter into a Pauline believer. The true Paul and Peter are not described. "The Paul of the Acts," observes Baur, "is different from the Paul of the epistles."<sup>2</sup> Accordingly,

<sup>1</sup> Schneckenburger, *Ueber den Zweck der Apostelgeschichte*.

<sup>2</sup> See Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. i. 8-13.



Baur defends the apologetic design which Schneckenburger supposes to be contained in the Acts, and employs it as an argument against its authenticity. He supposes that the Acts was the composition of a Pauline Christian in the second century, with a view to reconcile Pauline and Petrine Christianity : he maintains a conciliatory rather than an apologetic design.

The hypothesis of Baur is merely the creation of an ingenious mind, supported by the learning of the accomplished scholar. The general reader must certainly fail to see any such trace of a conciliatory design as Baur supposes contained in the Acts. The opposition between the views of Paul and Peter is entirely fanciful ; and the resemblance between the actions of these two apostles is certainly, to say the least, far-fetched. Nor is there the slightest trace of the use of Paul's epistles in the book ; whereas if the Acts were of so late a date as Baur supposes, the author would have employed them, especially as they would have furnished him with material in support of his conciliatory hypothesis, and in favour of Judaism, as when Paul enumerates the privileges of the Jewish nation, and expresses his ardent attachment for his countrymen (Rom. ix. 1-5).<sup>1</sup> And the supposition that the Acts is a fictitious work of the second century (110-130) is irreconcilable with the direct testimony of Irenæus, who lived in that century, to the authorship of Luke, with the undesigned coincidences between the Acts and the Pauline epistles, and with the general agreement between it and Jewish and Roman histories. In short, this hypothesis of Baur is unsupported by the book itself, and at variance with the general testimony of antiquity ; and, as Meyer observes, all those reasons which Baur and his followers bring forward do not prove what they are designed to prove, and are not able to overthrow the recognition of the ancient church.<sup>2</sup>

The opinion advanced by Baumgarten after Olshausen, and adopted by Lechler, Burton in his *Bampton Lectures*,

<sup>1</sup> The agreement also between the Acts and the Pauline epistles would have been more artificial.

<sup>2</sup> Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 6.



Wordsworth, and others, is entitled to more consideration. Baumgarten supposes that the Acts of the Apostles is a continuation of the life of Christ.<sup>1</sup> He grounds this view on the words with which Luke describes his former treatise, as being an account "of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach" (*ὅν ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς ποιεῖν τε καὶ διδάσκειν*). According to him, the word *ἤρξατο* is not a pleonasm, but full of meaning: the gospel is the beginning of the doing and teaching of Jesus, and the Acts is the continuation. The same work which Jesus began on earth, He continues in heaven. He Himself is the agent, the apostles are the mere instruments whom He employs. Not Paul, nor Peter, but Christ Himself, is the centre character of the Acts. In the words of Lechler: "This book professes to be the second part of the Gospel of Luke, so that the transactions of the apostles are simply the continuation of the life of our Lord. This connection is extremely important and instructive: for it teaches us that the earthly life of Jesus concluded with the ascension, has its fruit and continued efficacy; and His heavenly life commencing with the ascension, has its manifestation and proof in the acts and experiences of the apostles and first churches."<sup>2</sup>

Now, no doubt the view here expressed of the actions of the apostles is important and suggestive. The history of the church was under the immediate control of the exalted Redeemer, and may justly be considered as the continuation in heaven of the work which He had begun on earth. But perhaps it is pressing the idea too far to affirm, that to show this was the special design of Luke in writing the Acts: it confounds an inference which may be drawn from the work, or a use which may be made of it, with the design. If this were the intention of Luke, it would have been more clearly intimated and more prominently brought forward, and we would not have been left to infer it from a single phrase of doubtful interpretation. Still it asserts a great truth—the life of Christ in His church. As Chrysostom expresses it: "The

<sup>1</sup> Baumgarten's *Apostolic History*, vol. i. pp. 6, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Lange's *Bibelwerk*; *Apostelgeschichte von Lechler*, p. 1. See also Wordsworth on the Acts, pp. 2-5.

Gospels are the history of what Jesus did and taught; the Acts is the history of what the other Comforter did and taught.”<sup>1</sup>

#### V. TIME AND PLACE OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE ACTS.

Nothing can with certainty be affirmed with regard to the time when the Acts was written: there is nothing in the book itself which would lead to a determination on this point. German critics in general suppose that it was written after the destruction of Jerusalem. This is the view advocated by De Wette, Ewald, and Meyer. Meyer fixes the date of its composition about the year 80, being, as he observes, nearly contemporary with the Gospel of John and the History of Josephus.<sup>2</sup> The reason, however, which these biblical critics assign for thus dating the Acts after the destruction of Jerusalem, is because, according to their rationalistic views of prophecy, the Gospel of Luke, “the former treatise,” was written after that event. Lechler, who is far removed from such rationalistic views, fixes upon the same date, following the tradition of Irenæus, who relates that Luke wrote his Gospel after the death of Peter and Paul.

Schneckenburger thinks that he has found an indication of time in ch. viii. 26, αὕτη ἐστὶν ἔρημος, “which is desert,” and which he applies to the destruction of Gaza during the continuance of the Jewish war; and that the absence of all allusion to the destruction of Jerusalem proves that that event had not taken place. He therefore fixes the time of writing after the death of Paul and during the Jewish war. For the same reason, Lekebusch fixes the date of composition about the year 70; because, he observes, the notice concerning Gaza proves that its fate was in the fresh recollection of the writer as a fact which had shortly before occurred.<sup>3</sup> But

<sup>1</sup> So also Bengel observes: *non tam apostolorum, quam Spiritus sancti Acta describens, sicut prior liber Acta Jesu Christi habet.*

<sup>2</sup> Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 17. The same date is fixed on by Renan.

<sup>3</sup> Lekebusch, *Apostelgeschichte*, pp. 420-422.

the pronoun *αὕτη* is indefinite: it may as well apply to the road to Gaza as to the city.

The probability is, that both the Gospel of Luke and the Acts were written before the destruction of Jerusalem,—perhaps the former at Cæsarea during Paul's imprisonment there, and the latter at Rome. If the destruction of Jerusalem had already taken place, we should have expected some allusion to it in the work. There is no reason why the book may not have been written at the very period when the history ends; that is to say, about the year 63, or in the second year of Paul's imprisonment at Rome. This is in itself the most probable opinion, and there are no presumptions against it. Why the book ends apparently so abruptly with the statement that Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, will be afterwards considered.

If the above opinion as regards the time is correct, then the place of composition would be Rome. Other places have been mentioned, as Alexandria (Mill), Antioch (Hilgenfeld), proconsular Asia (Köstlin), but without any presumptions in their favour.

## VI. THE LANGUAGE AND TEXT OF THE ACTS.

That the Acts of the Apostles was originally written in Greek, is a statement which admits of no dispute, and is now universally accepted. The opinion of Harduin, that it is a translation from the Latin, is wholly unfounded. The Greek is purer than in most of the other writings of the New Testament. As already observed, a similarity of style pervades the whole book from beginning to end; yet the similarity is not exact, for the first part perceptibly differs from the second part by a more copious use of Hebraisms.<sup>1</sup> The first part exactly resembles in style the third Gospel, whereas the Greek in the second part is purer. The probable reason of this difference is, that in the first part of the Acts and in the Gospel Luke was dependent upon foreign sources;

<sup>1</sup> For a list of these Hebraisms, see De Wette's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 12; Davidson's *Introduction*, vol. ii. p. 23; Schwanbeck's *Quellen*, p. 36, etc.

whereas the second part of the Acts being for the most part the testimony of an eye-witness, he was more unfettered in the use of his peculiar style.

The text of the Acts, as it has come down to us, has a greater variety of readings than any other book of the New Testament, except the Apocalypse. It is not easy to assign a reason for this. The Acts seems to have been less read than the Gospels and Epistles, and this comparative neglect may have occasioned less anxiety to preserve its purity. Various attempts were also made to amend the text, and supposed omissions were supplied; as, for example, the three accounts of the conversion of Paul have been made to correspond even in verbal expressions. In consequence of this disturbed state of the text, great difficulty has been experienced in arriving at the correct reading. *Hic liber*, observes Matthæi, *in re critica est difficillimus et impeditissimus, quòd multa in eo turbata sunt*. The most numerous variations are found in the Codex Bezae. Bornemann has adopted this codex as containing the true readings. "The Codex Bezae," he observes, "excels all other manuscripts in internal goodness to an extent that is incredible, and a better text is contained in no other parchment which has come down to our time; so that the work may be said to have issued from the most complete and ancient fountain of all." Such an opinion is unfavourably regarded by critics of the highest eminence, though many of the readings found in that manuscript are of great value and interest. By the labours of Tischendorf, Lachmann, and De Wette, the original text may now be considered, to all intents and purposes, restored.

The following is a list of the uncial MSS. which are preserved of the Acts of the Apostles, with the marks by which they are known among biblical critics:—

Ⲑ. *The Codex Sinaiticus*.—This celebrated MS., which it is proposed to designate by the Hebrew letter Ⲑ, was found by Tischendorf in the Convent of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai in 1859. According to him, it belongs to the fourth century, and is probably the oldest MS. of the New Testament. It contains the Acts entire.



A. *The Codex Alexandrinus*.—This MS. was presented by Cyrillus Lucaris, patriarch of Constantinople, to Charles I. It is preserved in the British Museum. Tischendorf supposes that it was written about the middle of the fifth century. It contains the Acts entire.

B. *The Codex Vaticanus*.—This is one of the oldest and most valuable MSS. which we have. It is preserved in the Vatican Library. Tischendorf assigns it to the fourth century. It has been collated by Bartolucci, Bentley, and Birch. The edition of it published by Cardinal Mai has been unfavourably judged by biblical critics. It contains the Acts entire.

C. *The Codex Ephræmi*.—This MS. is preserved in the Royal Library of Paris. It is so called because the works of Ephrem the Syrian were written over a part of it. Tischendorf thinks that it belongs to the fifth century. It contains the following fragments:—From ch. i. 2 to iv. 3; from ch. v. 35 to x. 42; from ch. xiii. 1 to xvi. 36; from ch. xx. 10 to xxi. 30; from ch. xxii. 21 to xxiii. 18; from ch. xxiv. 15 to xxvi. 19; from ch. xxvii. 16 to xxviii. 4.

D. *The Codex Bezae or Cantabrigiensis*.—This MS. is so called because it was presented by Beza to the University of Cambridge in 1581. Tischendorf supposes that it belongs to the sixth century. It is defective as follows:—From ch. viii. 29 to x. 14; from ch. xxi. 2 to xxi. 10; from ch. xxi. 17 to xxi. 18; from ch. xxii. 10 to xxii. 20; from ch. xxii. 29 to the end of the book.

E. *The Codex Laudianus*.—This MS. is so called because it was presented by Archbishop Laud to the University of Oxford. It is supposed to have been written toward the close of the sixth century. It is highly praised both by Michaelis and Tischendorf. There is a defect from 'Ο δὲ Παῦλος, ch. xxvi. 29, to πορεύθητι, ch. xxviii. 26.

G. *The Codex Bibliothecæ Anglicæ*.—This MS. receives its name because it is preserved in the Anglican Library of the Augustinian monks at Rome. Tischendorf observes that it could not have been written before the middle of the ninth century. It commences at ch. viii. 10, and is complete to the end.



H. *The Codex Mutinensis*.—This MS. is deposited in the Library of Modena. According to Tischendorf, it was written in the ninth century. It begins with ch. v. 28, and is defective in the following places:—From ch. ix. 39 to x. 19; from ch. xiii. 36 to xiv. 3; the portion from ch. xxvii. 4 to the end has been supplied in uncial letters by a later hand, about the eleventh century.<sup>1</sup>

#### VII. ARRANGEMENT OF THE ACTS.

The work is divided into two distinct parts: the first part, embracing the first twelve chapters, contains an account of the progress of Christianity among the Jews, and of its extension to the Gentiles: and the second part, embracing the remaining sixteen chapters, contains an account of the missionary journeys of Paul. These two parts, again, admit of various subdivisions. Thus the first part may be divided into four subdivisions—the history of the church before Pentecost, the progress of the church in Jerusalem, its progress in Judea and Samaria, and its extension to the Gentiles. The second part also admits of a fourfold subdivision,—namely, the three missionary journeys of Paul, each of them beginning at Antioch and terminating at Jerusalem: and the account of his imprisonment. According to this plan, the Acts of the Apostles admits of the following arrangement:—

##### PART I. PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL IN JUDEA, AND ITS EXTENSION TO THE GENTILES.

- Sec. 1. History of the Church before Pentecost, Acts i.
- Sec. 2. Progress of the Gospel in Jerusalem, Acts ii.–vii.
- Sec. 3. Progress of the Gospel in Judea and Samaria, Acts viii. ix.
- Sec. 4. Extension of the Gospel to the Gentiles, Acts x.–xii.

##### PART II. THE MISSIONARY LABOURS OF THE APOSTLE PAUL.

- Sec. 1. Paul's first missionary journey, Acts xiii.–xv. 35.
- Sec. 2. Paul's second missionary journey, Acts xv. 36–xviii. 22.
- Sec. 3. Paul's third missionary journey, Acts xviii. 23–xxi. 16.
- Sec. 4. Paul's imprisonment, Acts xxi. 17–xxviii.

---

<sup>1</sup> The authority for the above information is Tischendorf. See his *Prolegomena*.

## VIII. CHRONOLOGY OF THE ACTS.

The Acts of the Apostles evidently proceeds in a chronological order; but it is extremely difficult to fix the precise dates of the different events recorded. Even the years of the birth and death of our Lord are matters of uncertainty. There are few notices of time given us in the earlier portion of the Acts, and those given are for the most part indefinite; but toward the close of the second portion, when Luke himself was with the apostle, the statements as regards time are definite. In the Epistle to the Galatians, also, exact dates are given. Paul there mentions two visits which he paid to Jerusalem (Gal. i. 18, ii. 1): the first corresponding with the visit mentioned in Acts ix. 26, three years after his conversion; and the second corresponding with the visit mentioned in Acts xv., fourteen years after his conversion.<sup>1</sup> The date of Paul's conversion, however, is a matter of extreme uncertainty. There are also several historical facts alluded to in the Acts, and which are mentioned by Jewish and Roman historians. The chief among these are the death of Herod Agrippa I., the famine in the time of Claudius, the expulsion of the Jews from Rome, and the procuratorships of Felix and Festus.

There is only one date which can be determined with certainty, and that is the period of the death of Herod Agrippa I. Josephus tells us that he reigned three years under Claudius, after he had received from him the whole of the dominions of his grandfather Herod the Great. Now Claudius, immediately on his accession to the imperial throne in the beginning of the year 41, made Herod Agrippa king of Judea and Samaria; consequently the death of that king is to be fixed in the year 44.

<sup>1</sup> The second of these visits of Paul to Jerusalem is, however, a subject of much dispute; and it is also disputed whether the fourteen years are to be calculated from the conversion of the apostle, or from his first visit to Jerusalem. These controverted points will be afterwards discussed.

Another date which is nearly certain, or at least may be determined within a year, is the removal of Felix from the procuratorship of Judea, and the entrance of Festus upon that office. On the departure of Felix, the Jewish inhabitants of Cæsarea sent a deputation to Rome to accuse him to the emperor; but Josephus informs us that he was screened by the court influence of his brother Pallas (*Ant.* xx. 8. 9). The deputation, then, must have arrived at Rome before the year 62; for in that year, according to Tacitus, Pallas was put to death by Nero (*Ann.* xiv. 65). According to Josephus, Burrus was also alive when the accusers of Felix were at Rome; but he died in March 62. Hence the recall of Felix must have occurred before A.D. 62. Again, Josephus states that, shortly after the entrance of Festus upon office, the Jews sent a deputation to Rome about a matter of dispute between them and that governor; and that the decision was given in their favour in order to gratify Poppæa, the wife of Nero (*Ant.* xx. 8. 11). Now this could not have happened earlier than the year 62, for according to Tacitus it was not until that year that Poppæa became Nero's wife (*Ann.* xiv. 60); and allowing some time for the dispute to arise, and the deputation to be sent, Festus could hardly have been earlier in office than the year 60. From these data it has been inferred by the ablest chronologists, that Felix was removed from office and Festus succeeded in A.D. 60.

A multitude of attempts have been made to give an exact chronology of the Acts. The ablest work on this subject is Wieseler's *Chronologie des Apostolischen Zeitalters*. Lists have been given by Meyer, Wieseler, Olshausen, and Davidson, of upwards of thirty chronological tables, not one of which agrees with another.

We give, for the sake of reference, a table containing a list of the Roman emperors and of the governors of Judea, along with the chief events mentioned in the Acts, chronicled under the years in which these events most probably occurred, similar to the tables given by Alford, Wordsworth, and Conybeare and Howson.

EMPERORS.	JEWISH GOVERNORS.	PRINCIPAL EVENTS IN THE ACTS.
33. Tiberius.	Pontius Pilate.	{ The ascension? miracle of Pentecost—Acts i. ii.
34. ...	...	{ During these years, the events recorded in Acts iii.—vi. 7
35. ...	...	{ probably occurred.
36. ...	...	{ Martyrdom of Stephen; evangelistic labours in Samaria—Acts vi. 8—viii.
37. Caligula.	Marullus.	{ Conversion of Paul?—Acts ix. 1-19.
38. ...	...	
39. ...	...	
40. ...	...	{ Paul's first visit to Jerusalem; he retires to Tarsus—Acts ix. 23-31.
41. Claudius.	Herod Agrippa I.	{ The missionary labours of Peter; conversion of Cornelius; the church at Antioch; Paul at Antioch—Acts ix. 32—xi.
42. ...		
43. ...		{ Death of Herod; Paul's second visit to Jerusalem—Acts xii.
44. ...	Cuspius Fadus.	
45. ...		
46. ...	Tiberius Alexander.	{ Paul's first missionary journey—Acts xiii. xiv.
47. ...		
48. ...		{ During these years, Paul appears to have been at Antioch, where he abode long time with the disciples—Acts xiv. 28.
49. ...	Ventidius Cummanus.	
50. ...		{ Council of Jerusalem; Paul's third visit. Commencement of his second missionary journey—Acts xv.—xvi. 5.
51. ...	Felix.	{ Paul in Macedonia and Achaia—Acts xvi. 6—xviii. 1.
52. ...	...	{ Paul at Corinth—Acts xviii. 1-17.
53. ...	...	{ Paul's fourth visit to Jerusalem. Paul's third missionary journey, commencing at Pentecost 54; he resides in Ephesus for nearly three years—Acts xviii. 18—xix. 20.
54. Nero.		
55. ...	...	{ Paul leaves Ephesus at Pentecost, and winters in Corinth—Acts xix. 21—xx. 3.
56. ...		{ Paul's journey to Jerusalem, which he reaches at Pentecost; his arrest and imprisonment—Acts xx. 4—xxiv. 26.
57. ...	...	
58. ...	...	

EMPERORS.	JEWISH GOVERNORS.	PRINCIPAL EVENTS IN THE ACTS.
59. Nero.	Felix.	{ Paul a prisoner in Cæsarea— Acts xxiv. 26, 27.
60. ...	Festus.	{ Paul's defence before Agrippa; in the autumn he sails for Rome, and winters at Malta —Acts xxv.-xxviii. 10.
61. ...	...	{ Paul's arrival at Rome in the spring—Acts xxviii. 11-29.
62. ...	Albinus.	{ Paul a prisoner at Rome—Acts xxviii. 30.
63. ...	...	{ Close of Paul's two years' im- prisonment—Acts xxviii. 30, 31.

*List of Works, with their Editions, cited in this Commentary.*

- Akerman's Numismatic Illustrations of the New Testament. London 1846.
- Alexander on the Acts of the Apostles. London: Nisbet and Co. 1857.
- Alford's Greek Testament, vol. ii. Third edition, 1857.
- Baumgarten's Apostolic History. Clark's translation. 1863.
- Baur's Apostel Paulus. Zweite Auflage. Leipzig 1866.
- Bengelii Gnomon Novi Testamenti. Editio tertia. Tübingæ 1850.
- Biscoe on the Acts of the Apostles. Oxford 1829.
- Calvin's Commentary on the Acts. Calvin Translation Society.
- Chrysostom's Homilies on the Acts.
- Conybeare and Howson's St. Paul. New edition, 1862.
- Cook on the Acts of the Apostles. Second edition. London 1866.
- Davidson's Introduction to the New Testament. London: Bagster and Sons. 1849.
- Davidson's Introduction to the History of the New Testament. London: Longmans. 1868.<sup>1</sup>
- De Wette's Apostelgeschichte. Dritte Auflage, 1848.
- Doddridge's Family Expositor. London 1840.
- Du Veil on the Acts of the Apostles. London 1851.
- Eadie's Bible Encyclopædia.
- Eusebii Historia Ecclesiastica.
- Ewald's Geschichte des Volkes Israel. Zweiter Ausgabe. Sechster Band, 1858.

<sup>1</sup> These works of Dr. Davidson are two entirely different books, and view the Acts from two different standpoints. In order to distinguish them in the references, the last published is called the "New Introduction."



- Gieseler's Church History. Clark's translation. 1846.
- Griesbach's *Novum Testamentum Græcum*.
- Hackett on the Acts. Boston 1863.
- Horne's Introduction to the Scriptures. Ninth edition, 1846.
- Humphry's Commentary on the Acts. Second edition. London 1854.
- Josephus' Jewish Antiquities and Jewish War.
- Kitto's Illustrated Commentary on the Bible.
- Kuincel's *Novi Testamenti Libri Historici*, tom. iii. London 1835.
- Lange's *Apostolische Zeitalter*. Braunschweig 1853.
- Lange's *Bibelwerk : Der Apostel Geschichten von Lechler*. Dritte Auflage, 1869.
- Lardner's Works. 5 vols. quarto. London 1815.
- Lekebusch's Composition und Entstehung der Apostelgeschichte. 1854.
- Lewin's Life and Epistles of St. Paul. London 1851.
- Lightfoot's *Horæ Hebraicæ et Talmudicæ*. Oxford 1859.
- Meyer's Apostelgeschichte. Dritte Auflage, 1861.
- Michaelis' Introduction to the New Testament. By Bishop Marsh.
- Neander's History of the Planting of Christianity. Bohn's translation.
- Neander's Church History. Bohn's translation.
- Oertel's Paulus in der Apostelgeschichte. Halle 1868.
- Olshausen on the Gospels and the Acts. Clark's translation. 1856.
- Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*.
- Pearson's (Bishop) Lectures on the Acts. Cambridge 1851.
- Renan's *Les Apôtres*.
- Renan's Saint Paul.
- Robinson's Lexicon of the New Testament. New edition. London 1858.
- Schaff's History of the Apostolic Church. Edinburgh : Clark. 1854.
- Schwanbeck's Quellen der Apostelgeschichte. Darmstadt 1847.
- Smith's (Dr. William) Dictionary of the Bible.
- Smith's (James) Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul. Second edition, 1856.
- Thiersch's History of the Apostolic Church. Translated by Carlyle.
- Tischendorf's *Novum Testamentum Græce*. Editio septima, 1859.
- Tischendorf's *Vetus Testamentum Græce*. 1850.
- Whitby's Commentary.
- Wieseler's Chronologie des Apostolischen Zeitalters. Göttingen 1848.
- Winer's *Biblisches Realwörterbuch*. Zweite Auflage.
- Winer's Grammar of the New Testament. Translated by Masson. Fourth edition.
- Wordsworth's Greek Testament : The Acts. Fifth edition.
- Zeller's Apostelgeschichte. Stuttgart 1854.

# PART I.

## PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY IN JUDEA, AND ITS EXTENSION TO THE GENTILES.



### SECTION I.

#### THE ASCENSION—ACTS I. 1-12.

1 The first treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all things which Jesus began both to do and to teach, 2 Until the day on which He was taken up, after that He through the Holy Ghost had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen : 3 To whom also He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days, and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God : 4 And, being assembled together, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to await the promise of the Father, which ye heard from me. 5 Because John baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not long after these days. 6 When they therefore were come together, they asked Him, saying, Lord, restorest Thou at this time the kingdom to Israel ? 7 But He said to them, It pertains not to you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has put in His own power. 8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you : and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the end of the earth. 9 And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was lifted up ; and a cloud received Him from their sight. 10 And, while they were gazing up to heaven, as He went away, behold, two men stood by them in white garments ; 11 Who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking up to heaven ? this Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, shall come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven. 12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath-day's journey.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

Ver. 8. *Μου*, found in A, B, C, D,  $\aleph$ , is much better attested than *μοι*, found in E. Ver. 10. The plural *ἐσθήσεσιν λευκαῖς*, found in A, B, C,  $\aleph$ , is preferred by Lachmann and Tischendorf to the singular *ἐσθήτι λευκῇ*, found in D, E.

## EXEGETICAL REMARKS.

Ver. 1. *Τὸν μὲν πρῶτον λόγον*—*The first treatise*. There is no necessity for supposing that *πρῶτον* is here used for *πρότερον*, *the former*. This “first treatise” is beyond question the third Gospel. *Μὲν* is here used without the corresponding *δέ*, the sentence being incomplete : some such clause as “this second treatise I now compose” requires to be added.

*Ὡ Θεόφιλε*—*O Theophilus*. It is evident from Luke’s Gospel that Theophilus was a convert to Christianity (Luke i. 4) ; and it is also probable that he was a man of rank, as the epithet *κράτιστε*, *most noble*, is there prefixed to his name,—an epithet which generally refers not to character, but to station ; being the same which is given by Claudius Lysias and Tertullus to Felix, and by Paul to Festus. Some of the Fathers, as Origen, Ambrose, and Epiphanius, suppose that the word is not a proper name, but an appellative denoting a “lover of God,” and applicable to every Christian reader ; but its occurrence in two purely historical works, and the epithet *κράτιστε*, refute this opinion. Theodore Hase supposes that Theophilus is the same as Theophilus the son of Annas, who was for some years the high priest (Joseph. *Ant.* xviii. 5. 3 and xix. 6. 2), and that the third Gospel and the Acts were apologies for Christianity ; an opinion which Michaelis is inclined to support,<sup>1</sup> but which is at variance with the dedication of the Gospel, which intimates that Theophilus was a Christian. The most extraordinary opinion is that advanced by Jacob Hase, that Theophilus was none other than the distinguished Jewish philosopher Philo.

*Περὶ πάντων*—*concerning all*. Luke here asserts the

<sup>1</sup> See Marsh’s *Michaelis*, vol. iv. p. 239, second edition.

completeness of his Gospel; but the words must not be pressed too far, as many important events of the life of Christ, recorded by the other evangelists, are omitted by Luke; and because, as St. John tells us, it would be impossible to write all that Jesus did (John xxi. 25).

Ὁν ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς ποιεῖν τε καὶ διδάσκειν—*which Jesus began both to do and to teach.* Different meanings have been attached to the word ἤρξατο. Some, as Kuinœl, suppose it to be pleonastic, and the clause to be equivalent to ἐποίησε τε καὶ ἐδίδαξε<sup>1</sup>—*which Jesus did and taught*; but this is a mere arbitrary and unnecessary conjecture. Others, as Winer, suppose it to be elliptical, and would read the sentence thus: *which Jesus began and continued to do and teach, until the day that He was taken up*;<sup>2</sup> which certainly gives a good sense. Lightfoot explains it thus: “In the former treatise I discoursed of all those things which Jesus Himself began to do and teach; in this I am to give a relation of those things which were continued by the apostles after Him.”<sup>3</sup> Alford supposes the meaning to be that the Gospel contained the ἀρχάς, the outset of the doings and teachings of Jesus, as distinguished from this second treatise, which was to relate their sequels and results. And somewhat similar to this is the opinion of Olshausen and Wordsworth, adopted and defended at great length by Baumgarten, that the Gospel contains the beginning, and the Acts of the Apostles the continuation, of the doings and teachings of Jesus;<sup>4</sup> an opinion which indeed contains a great truth, and is most suggestive, but which, if intended, would have been otherwise indicated than merely by the indefinite word ἤρξατο.<sup>5</sup> The simplest meaning seems to be: *of all that Jesus from the beginning did and taught, until the day that He was taken up.*<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kuinœl's *Libri Historici*, vol. iii. p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Winer's *Grammar of the New Testament*, p. 643, Clark's translation.

<sup>3</sup> Lightfoot's *Horæ Hebraicæ*, vol. iv. p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Baumgarten's *Apostolic History*, vol. i. p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> See Introduction, pp. 27–29.

<sup>6</sup> The translation adopted by De Wette.

Ver. 2. "Ἀχρι ἧς ἡμέρας—ἀνελήμφθη—until the day when He was taken up. The ascension is the boundary between the Gospel and the Acts. The Gospel ends, and the Acts commences, with an account of it: in the former, the ascension is the termination of the earthly life of Jesus; in the latter, it is the commencement of His heavenly life.

Διὰ Πνεύματος ἁγίου—through the Holy Ghost. There is a diversity in the reading and punctuation of these words: they admit of a threefold construction. 1. Some connect them with ἀνελήμφθη—He was taken up by the Holy Ghost; a reading which has few supporters. 2. Others (Lardner, Michaelis, Kuinœl, Olshausen, De Wette) connect them with οὓς ἐξελέξατο—the apostles whom He had chosen by the Holy Ghost. 3. And others (Lechler, Meyer, Alford, Wordsworth) connect them, as in our English version, with ἐντειλάμενος—having given commandments by the Holy Ghost; and this seems to be the most simple and appropriate construction. This construction, however, is itself capable of various meanings. Some (Bengel) render it, that Jesus gave these commandments by the communication of the Holy Ghost; not orally, but by inspiration. Others (Dr. Burton), that "He told His apostles that His commands would be more fully made known to them by the Holy Ghost." But the obvious meaning is, that Jesus by word of mouth, anointed as He was by the Holy Ghost, gave commandments to the apostles.

Ver. 3. Ἐν πολλοῖς τεκμηρίοις—by many infallible proofs. The word τεκμήριον is used to denote the strongest of all proofs—sure tokens. It is employed by Aristotle to signify demonstrative evidence. Beza renders it *certissimis signis*; and our English translation, *infallible proofs*, does not too strongly express its meaning. These infallible proofs of His resurrection Christ gave to His disciples. He appeared to them frequently: at least nine different appearances are recorded by the evangelists:—1. His appearance to Mary Magdalene; 2. His appearance to the women on their way from the sepulchre; 3. His appearance to the disciples going to Emmaus; 4. His appearance to Peter; 5. His



appearance to the apostles, Thomas being absent; 6. His appearance when Thomas was present; 7. His appearance at the Sea of Tiberias; 8. His appearance at a mountain in Galilee; and 9. His last interview with His disciples at Jerusalem. And at these appearances He gave His disciples ample opportunity of testing the reality of His resurrection, by speaking to them, eating and walking with them, and allowing Thomas to touch the print of the nails, and to thrust his hand into His side. He gave them sure tokens (τεκμήρια) that the same body which was crucified was raised from the dead.

Ὅπτανόμενος αὐτοῖς—*being seen by them*. Baumgarten supposes that this implies that Christ rose from the dead with a glorified body; that His body after the resurrection was spiritual, different from that body of flesh and blood which He possessed before His passion. "The word ὁπτανόμενος," he observes, "signifies that, in order to converse with His disciples during these forty days, He quitted the invisible world on each occasion."<sup>1</sup> But this is putting a meaning into the word which it does not bear: it merely signifies that Jesus appeared to His disciples, perhaps suddenly, but it determines nothing as to the nature of His body. There is, it must be admitted, a certain degree of mystery connected with Christ's raised body. After His resurrection He did not live among His disciples, but only appeared to them occasionally, and that often suddenly and unexpectedly, and vanished from their sight as suddenly as He came. But still the idea that His body was entirely spiritual does not accord with His eating and drinking with His disciples. Chrysostom remarks on these words: "He was not always with them now, as He was before the resurrection; for Luke does not say that He was seen by them forty days, but during forty days."<sup>2</sup>

Δι' ἡμερῶν τεσσαράκοντα—*during forty days*. This is the only place where the interval between the resurrection and the ascension is given. It has been asserted that there is here a discrepancy between the Acts and the narrative of the

<sup>1</sup> Baumgarten's *Apostolical History*, vol. i. p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Chrysostom on the *Acts*, Hom. i.

resurrection given in Luke's Gospel. It has been affirmed that, according to the Gospel, the resurrection and the ascension took place on the same day.<sup>1</sup> Meyer thinks that this diversity supposes that a considerable interval occurred between the composition of the Gospel and of the Acts, during which the tradition of forty days was developed.<sup>2</sup> But the discrepancy is only in the minds of these writers. Luke, in the Gospel, gives no determinations of time, and it is highly improbable that all which he relates as occurring after the resurrection could be compressed within the limits of a single day.

*Βασιλείας τοῦ Θεοῦ*—*the kingdom of God*. That is, the Messianic kingdom; the kingdom which Jesus Christ came to establish in the world; that kingdom which "is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xiv. 17): in other words, the dispensation of the gospel.

Ver. 4. *Συναλιζόμενος*—*being assembled together*. The margin of our Bible reads, *eating together with them*; and so the word was understood by Chrysostom, Jerome, Theophylact, among the Fathers, and by Meyer among modern critics. But this arises from mistaking the etymology of the word; as it is not derived from ἅλς, *salt*, but from ἀλία, *an assembly*, or perhaps rather from ἀλής, *collected together*. Others, again, suppose it to belong to the middle voice, and render it *assembling them*—*calling together the apostles*; but there is no example of the word being so used. The correct meaning, then, is, *being assembled together*, the verb being in the passive. Olshausen and others suppose that the meeting here mentioned in the fourth verse is different from the one afterwards mentioned in the sixth verse, and took place some days before the ascension.<sup>3</sup> Lightfoot supposes that this meeting took place in Galilee, and was the meeting of Jesus with His disciples in the mountain of Galilee, according to the appointment He had made. But the reasons given

<sup>1</sup> Zeller's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 77. Davidson's *New Introduction*, vol. ii. p. 196. Renan's *Les Apôtres*.

<sup>2</sup> Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Olshausen on the *Gospels and Acts*, vol. iv. p. 230.

for this distinction of the meetings are insufficient : the narrative is continuous throughout ; and the particle *οὖν* in the sixth verse seems to connect the meeting there mentioned with the fourth verse. Accordingly this meeting took place on the day of the ascension ; and the place of meeting was either Mount Olivet or Jerusalem, from which we read, “Jesus led them out as far as Bethany” (Luke xxiv. 50). No doubt this meeting was by the appointment of Christ ; for we cannot suppose that otherwise the apostles would have left Galilee, to which they had betaken themselves, and where Christ had appeared to them so long before the feast of Pentecost, unless they had been directed to do so by their Lord.

*Παρήγγειλεν αὐτοῖς*—*He commanded them.* The persons assembled with Christ were the apostles, the same as those to whom He showed Himself alive after His passion. Whether they only were present, or whether there were other disciples with them, is undetermined : the narrative would seem to suggest that the former opinion is the more probable.

*Τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ Πατρὸς*—*the promise of the Father.* The promise here referred to was the bestowal of the Holy Spirit, and especially the miraculous gifts which were conferred on the disciples on the day of Pentecost. The apostles had already obtained the influences of the Spirit, but by no means in so copious a measure as they were to receive them after the ascension of their Lord. “The Holy Ghost,” we are expressly informed, “was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified” (John vii. 39). Now that the Messiah promised to the fathers has appeared, the gift of the Spirit is peculiarly the promise, the coming of which we are to expect. Here, and in Luke’s Gospel (ch. xxiv. 49), this gift is called “the promise of the Father,” because it was repeatedly and expressly promised by God under the Old Testament dispensation (Joel ii. 28, etc.). Our Lord also here reminds the apostles that He Himself had often made the same promise—*which ye have heard of me* ; the allusion being not to the promise recorded in Luke’s Gospel (Luke xxiv. 49), as there also the last interview of Jesus with His disciples is

probably related, but rather to the promises made by our Lord in His last discourses before He suffered, as recorded in John's Gospel (John xiii.-xvi.).

Ver. 5. "Ὅτι Ἰωάννης μὲν ἐβάπτισεν ὕδατι—because John baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. There appears here to be a reference to the testimony of the Baptist himself: "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I cometh: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire" (Luke iii. 16). This promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, when cloven tongues like as of fire sat upon each of the disciples, and when they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. This was, as Calvin happily expresses it, the common baptism of the church; for it was for the use of the church that the gifts of the Spirit were so largely conferred on the disciples.

Οὐ μετὰ πολλὰς ταύτας ἡμέρας—not long after these days; or, as we would express it, after a few days. The period which intervened between the ascension and Pentecost, when this promise was fulfilled, and the apostles were baptized with the Holy Ghost, was only ten days.

Ver. 6. Κύριε, εἰ ἐν τῷ χρόνῳ—Ἰσραὴλ—Lord, restorest Thou at this time the kingdom to Israel? This question of the apostles was suggested by the conversations which Jesus had with them concerning the kingdom of God, and by the promise which He made them of a speedy advent of the Holy Ghost. They inquired whether Jesus was now about to establish His Messianic kingdom over Israel. Lightfoot supposes that the question was one of astonishment: "Lord, wilt Thou restore the kingdom to those who have dealt so basely and perfidiously with Thee?"<sup>1</sup> But the words are obviously the language of desire and hope. Meyer, we think correctly, refers the time of the restoration inquired after to the οὐ μετὰ πολλὰς ταύτας ἡμέρας.<sup>2</sup> The apostles connected the outpouring of the Spirit with the establishment of the Messianic kingdom; and therefore, when our Lord promised that after a few days they would be baptized with the Holy Ghost,

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot's *Horæ Hebraicæ*, vol. iv. p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, pp. 29, 30.



they regarded this as an indirect indication that He would then, ἐν τῷ χρόνῳ τούτῳ, restore the kingdom to Israel.

It is, however, not very clear what ideas the apostles attached to the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. No doubt they shared in the erroneous notions of the Jews in general concerning a temporal Messiah. They still clung to the idea that the Messiah would restore to Israel the palmy days of David and Solomon; that He would rescue Judea from the Roman yoke, and establish His throne in Jerusalem. These views had indeed received a terrible shock by the crucifixion of their Master; but His resurrection, and His renewal of the promise of the Spirit, had inspired them with new hopes. Still, however, we cannot suppose that the apostles, after being so long associated with Christ, would entertain wholly carnal views concerning the Messianic kingdom. They probably imagined that the world would be gradually converted to Judaism, and that Jerusalem, the holy city, would be the resort of all nations: most evidently they had not the slightest conception of any other way by which the Gentiles could be admitted into the kingdom of God, except by embracing the Jewish religion. It was not until many years after this that they realized the great truth, that God was the God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews, and that all were freely invited into the Messianic kingdom.

Ver. 7. Our Lord, in His answer, represses the curiosity of the apostles, their impatience, and perhaps also the narrow spirit with which they restricted the kingdom to Israel. The apostles had asked Him concerning the time, and our Lord's answer is confined to this point. He tells them not to be too curious regarding the future, but to refer times and seasons to Him who has reserved them in His own power. But it is to be observed that He neither denies nor affirms the fact of the kingdom. He does not correct the misconceptions which He well knew the apostles entertained, knowing that the Holy Spirit, who was shortly to be given, would impart to them clear views of the spiritual nature of His kingdom, and would guide them into all truth. The course of events, also, would soon correct their erroneous notions. Χρόνους



ἡ καιρός—the *times or the seasons*. These words are not to be regarded as equivalent terms. Χρόνος is time absolutely, without regard to circumstances ; καιρός is a definite determined period. Καιρός, observes Meyer, “signifies a definite limited space of time, with the idea of fitness.” Time, in both these points of view, both absolute and relative, is by the Father retained in His own power.

Ver. 8. Δύναμιν ἐπελθόντος τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς—*power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you*. The margin of our Bible reads, *the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you* ; but the other rendering, with the construction of the genitive absolute, is to be preferred.

Καὶ ἔσεσθέ μου μάρτυρες—*And ye shall be my witnesses, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the end of the earth*. In these words the office and mission of the apostles are declared. Their office is that of witness : “they were not to be prophets of the future, but witnesses of the past.” Their mission was to witness for Christ in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the end of the earth. We see here the actual course which the gospel took : first it was preached in Jerusalem ; and after the dispersion, by reason of the persecution which followed the martyrdom of Stephen, in Judea and Samaria, and afterwards by Peter to Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, and by Paul in Asia and Europe. By ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς is not to be understood the limits of the Holy Land, but the end of the earth. This mission was not, in its completeness, executed by the apostles : it continues to be the mission of the church, until the whole world shall be converted, and do homage to Christ as its Lord and King.

Ver. 9. ἐπήρθη—*He was lifted up*. Luke informs us, in his Gospel, that the ascension occurred when Jesus was in the act of blessing His disciples : “And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up to heaven” (Luke xxiv. 51). When, however, we speak of the ascension of Christ, it must be understood only of His human nature ; for as God He is everywhere present. His ascension did not consist in any local removal of His

divine nature, but in the exaltation of His humanity. He entered heaven as Mediator between God and man, and as such was exalted far above all principality and power. "While," as Baumgarten beautifully expresses it, "the ascension of Elijah may be compared to the flight of a bird, which none can follow; the ascension of Christ is as it were a bridge between heaven and earth, laid down for all who are drawn to Him by His earthly existence."<sup>1</sup>

*Kaì νεφέλη*—and a cloud. This cloud was the visible symbol of the presence of God. Chrysostom calls it the "royal chariot." It was the Shekinah of the Jews, the bright cloud which is so frequently mentioned as appearing to the Israelites during their march through the desert, and which rested on the mercy-seat of the temple built by Solomon. This cloud is also mentioned in the narrative of the transfiguration: "A bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. xvii. 5).

It has been objected to the reality of the ascension, that it is only mentioned by two out of the four evangelists, Mark and Luke, and these were neither apostles nor eye-witnesses of the fact which they relate. Matthew and John, who are represented as present, are silent on the subject. And it has been further urged that this event is not dwelt upon by any of the other writers of the New Testament. Now it must be confessed that this comparative silence of the sacred writers, concerning an incident of such importance in the life of our Lord, does at first indeed appear strange; but let us inquire into its extent, and the reasons for it.

It is a mistake to suppose that the ascension is only mentioned by Mark and Luke: it is clearly implied by the two other evangelists. Thus, in St. Matthew's Gospel, our Lord is represented as saying, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. xxvi. 64). And St. John tells us that our Lord told His disciples in general, that "the Son of man would ascend up where He was before" (John vi. 62);

<sup>1</sup> Baumgarten's *Apostolical History*, vol. i. p. 21.

and that, after His resurrection, He said to Mary Magdalene, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John xx. 17). Nor are the other sacred writers entirely silent about the ascension. St. Paul expressly says that Christ "was received up into glory" (1 Tim. iii. 16); and St. Peter declares that Christ "is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God" (1 Pet. iii. 22); and yet even more distinctly, in his first address to the Jews, when contrasting David with Christ, he says, "For David is not ascended into the heavens" (Acts ii. 34),—thus treating the ascension as a known fact (see also Acts i. 22). And the book of Revelation is full of proofs that Christ in His glorified humanity has entered into heaven. But besides these direct proofs, as Olshausen has well remarked, the ascension is necessarily presupposed in the idea of the resurrection. Jesus having risen from the dead, no other mode of departure from this world is conceivable than an ascension into heaven. We cannot possibly imagine that He would die again; for if so, instead of overcoming death, He would in the end be overcome by it. Even although Luke had given us no account of the visible ascension of Christ in the presence of His apostles, yet His last interview with them, and His disappearance from them, must have been regarded by us as a removal to heaven.

Still, however, although not as an argument against the ascension, the fact remains, that this great event is less frequently alluded to by the sacred writers than we might have expected. Can we assign a reason for this? We think, with Lange and Olshausen, that it is to be found in this, that the ascension was not regarded by the sacred writers as a distinct and separate event, but as part of the resurrection and glory of the Redeemer. The resurrection was the essential point—the triumph of the Redeemer over death, the completion of salvation, the public manifestation of His divine Sonship, the commencement of His heavenly life. The ascension was a part of that glory which followed; so much so, indeed, that all those passages which refer to Christ's

exaltation, virtually include His ascension. For this reason both the sacred writers and the early Church gave far greater prominence to the resurrection than to the ascension. "Everything of importance," observes Olshausen, "in a doctrinal point of view was concentrated in the resurrection: with it closed the earthly being of Christ. The ascension, and also the outpouring of the Spirit, which was connected with the ascension, and dependent upon it, are only the results of the resurrection, viewed as the glorification of the body, and the consequences of the victory over death."<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 10. Whilst the apostles stood gazing up to heaven, and fixed in mute astonishment, their attention was drawn by the sudden appearance of two men in white garments. These were doubtless angels in the form of men; the white garments being the emblem of heavenly purity. As angels proclaimed His birth to the shepherds of Bethlehem, and announced His resurrection to the women at the sepulchre; so they now appear to the apostles at His ascension, and predict His second advent.

Ver. 11. *Οὐ καὶ εἶπαν*—Who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up to heaven? The apostles are here gently reprimanded for spending their time in idle contemplation; whilst their mission was actively to be engaged as witnesses for Christ, and patiently to await His second coming.

*Οὗτος ὁ Ἰησοῦς—οὐρανόν.* Whilst the angels reprove the apostles for their inactive contemplation, they also comfort them with the prospect of Christ's second coming. He will come again as He went to heaven, with similar glory, and in similar circumstances. As He ascended in a visible manner, so, when He appears the second time, every eye shall see Him. As a cloud received Him out of the sight of His apostles, so shall He come again in the clouds of heaven. And as angels accompanied Him on His ascension to heaven, so shall they attend Him at His second coming.

Ver. 12. *Ἀπὸ ὄρους τοῦ καλουμένου Ἑλαιῶνος*—from the

<sup>1</sup> See Olshausen *on the Gospels and Acts*, vol. iv. pp. 234-238; also Lange's *Life of Christ*, vol. v. pp. 134-140.



*mount called Olivet.* This mount was so called from the number of olive trees which grew upon it. Its highest point, the so-called "Mount of the Ascension," is about 2700 feet above the level of the sea, being, however, only 200 feet above Mount Zion, and 300 feet above the temple. It lies to the east of Jerusalem, being between it and the Dead Sea. At its foot, on the western side, is situated the garden of Gethsemane; and Bethany lies on the other side, being two miles distant from Jerusalem. The highest point is in the centre, and is, according to tradition, the spot where Christ ascended. It was here that the Empress Helena erected her church as a memorial of that event.

The tradition which fixes upon "the Mount of the Ascension" as the true spot is probably erroneous. In the Acts we are indeed informed that the apostles returned from the mount called Olivet; but St. Luke in his Gospel tells us that "Jesus led them out as far as Bethany" (Luke xxiv. 50). Nor is there any discrepancy in these accounts, as Bethany lay near the foot of the Mount of Olives, on its eastern slope, away from Jerusalem. This being the case, it would follow that the ascension did not take place from the summit of Mount Olivet, the so-called "Mount of the Ascension," but at least a mile distant from it, in the neighbourhood of Bethany.<sup>1</sup> Still it was on the same mount where He endured His great agony. "The same place, therefore," as Olshausen remarks, "where the deepest humiliation of our Lord occurred, viz. in the conflict of Gethsemane, witnessed also His sublimest elevation."

*Σαββάτου ὁδόν—a Sabbath-day's journey.* This, according to the traditions of the Jews, was two thousand cubits, or about three-quarters of a mile. It was the supposed distance between the camp and the tabernacle in the wilderness (Josh. iii. 4). The law of Moses gave no directions about this matter; but the regulation was not considered the less binding, nor was the violation of it the less punishable, on that account. This is one of those examples in which the

<sup>1</sup> Others suppose that by Bethany is meant not the village, but the district of Bethany. See Wordsworth's *Commentary*.



traditions of the elders were as carefully observed as the commands of the law. Hence our Saviour, in His prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem, tells His disciples to pray that their flight might not be on the Sabbath-day (Matt. xxiv. 20), when probably they would have been prevented. But what distance is here mentioned? Bethany, the place to which our Lord led His disciples, is, we are informed in St. John's Gospel, fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem (John xi. 18). The Mount of Olives, on the other hand, is said by Josephus in one place to be five furlongs distant (*Ant.* xx. 8. 6), and in another place to be six furlongs (*Bell. Jud.* v. 2, 3). From this, then, it would seem that not the distance of the precise spot where the ascension took place, but of the Mount of Olives, on which it happened, is intended by the sacred historian.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Hackett *on the Acts*, p. 41; Smith's *Dictionary*—Mount of Olives; Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 32.

## SECTION II.

### THE ELECTION OF MATTHIAS—Acts i. 13–26.

13 And when they came in, they went up into the upper room, where abode both Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James of Alphæus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas of James. 14 These all continued with one accord in prayer with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren. 15 And in those days, Peter, rising up in the midst of the brethren, said (the number of the names together was about an hundred and twenty), 16 Men and brethren, it was necessary that this scripture should be fulfilled which the Holy Ghost foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who was guide to those who took Jesus. 17 For he was numbered among us, and received the office of this ministry. 18 Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. (19 And it was known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; so that that field was called in their own dialect, Akeldama, that is, The field of blood.) 20 For it is written in the book of Psalms, “Let his habitation be desolate, and let there be no dweller therein;” and, “His office let another take.” 21 Therefore it is necessary that, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day when He was taken up from us, one should become a witness with us of His resurrection. 23 And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. 24 And having prayed, they said, Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all, show whom of these two Thou hast chosen, 25 To take the place of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas turned aside, that he might go to his own place. 26 And they cast lots for them; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

### CRITICAL NOTES.

Ver. 14. *Kaì τῇ δέήσει* is wanting in all the uncial mss., and is rejected by Griesbach, Tischendorf, Lachmann,

Meyer, and De Wette. Ver. 15. A, B, C,  $\aleph$ , have ἀδελφῶν the reading adopted by Tischendorf and Lachmann, instead of μαθητῶν, contained in D, E. Ver. 25. λαβεῖν τὸν τόπον, found in A, B, C, D, is much better attested than λαβεῖν τὸν κλῆρον, found in  $\aleph$ . Ver. 26. Instead of αὐτῶν, A, B, C,  $\aleph$  read αὐτοῖς, the reading adopted by Tischendorf.

#### EXEGETICAL REMARKS.

Ver. 13. Καὶ ὅτε εἰσῆλθον—and when they came in, namely into the city. Ἐἰς τὸ ὑπερῶον—into the upper room. Some (Lightfoot, Du Veil, Hammond) suppose that this upper room was one of the chambers attached to the temple; but it is in the highest degree improbable that the Jewish hierarchy, who had the charge of these rooms, would permit the disciples of Jesus to assemble in one of them for worship. We are then to understand the upper room of some private house which the apostles had hired, or whose possessor was a disciple. Epiphanius tells us that it was on Mount Zion, and that a Christian church was afterwards erected on the spot where it stood. It is to be observed that this upper room is particularized by the definite article—the upper room, some well-known upper room: perhaps, as Ewald suggests, the large upper room in which our Lord partook of the pass-over with His apostles (Luke xxii. 12), or the room where He appeared to them after His resurrection (John xx. 19, 26). Upper rooms, directly under the flat roof, were in the East large and spacious, and were often set apart as halls for meetings. Thus it was in an upper room that Paul delivered his farewell address to the disciples at Troas (Acts xx. 8).

Οὗ ἦσαν καταμένοντες—where abode. This is not at variance with the statement in Luke's Gospel, that after the ascension the disciples were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God (Luke xxiv. 53): for that statement merely implies that, as devout Israelites, they were to be found in the temple at the stated hours of prayer; whereas here we are informed that at other times they assembled in this upper room for prayer and religious fellowship.

"Ο τε Πέτρος—*both Peter*. This is the fourth catalogue which we have of the apostles. The other catalogues are Matt. x. 2–4, Mark iii. 16–19, and Luke vi. 14–16. They all vary in the order in which the names are given, and several of the apostles are mentioned under different names. Peter, John, James, and Andrew are in all the catalogues, though not in the same order, placed first. Philip is said to be of Bethsaida; and Thomas is surnamed Didymus, or the twin (John xi. 16); Bartholomew is supposed to be identical with Nathanael of Cana (John i. 46, xxi. 2); Matthew is called the publican, and is identified with Levi (Luke v. 27), as the circumstances of his call and that of Matthew are the same (Matt. ix. 9). James is here, and in the other three catalogues, designated Ἀλφαίου, *of Alphæus*; the genitive being used to denote relationship, and signifying in general, *the son of*. Whether he is the same as James the Lord's brother, the so-called bishop of Jerusalem, is a matter of dispute, and shall afterwards be considered.<sup>1</sup> Simon, here surnamed ὁ Ζηλωτής, *the zealot*, is in St. Matthew's Gospel called ὁ Καναναῖος,<sup>2</sup> a word of similar import. Some suppose that this surname refers to his having previously belonged to the political sect of the Zealots, and others to his ardent disposition. The last name is Judas of James, which some render *Judas the brother of James* (Jude 1), and others *Judas the son of (an unknown) James*, regarding him as a different person from Jude, the author of the epistle. He is in St. Matthew's Gospel called "Lebbæus, whose surname was Thaddæus" (Matt. x. 3); Lebbæus signifying, according to Lightfoot, a native of Lebba, a maritime town of Galilee; and Thaddæus being, according to Dr. Wordsworth, of similar derivation with Judas.

Ver. 14. Σὺν γυναιξίν—*with the women*. The women here mentioned are probably those devout women of Galilee who followed Christ in His missionary journeys and accompanied Him on His last visit to Jerusalem, and who were present both at the cross and at the sepulchre. The Gospels men-

<sup>1</sup> See note to Acts xii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> The reading of B, C, D, adopted by Tischendorf, Matt. x. 4.

tion by name Mary Magdalene; Mary the mother of James and Joses; Joanna the wife of Chusa, Herod's steward; Salome the mother of James and John; and a certain Susanna. *Καὶ Μαριάμ τῇ μητρὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ*—and *Mary the mother of Jesus*. Mary is here mentioned for the last time. Her subsequent history is involved in obscurity. According to one tradition, she died in peace at Jerusalem; and according to another, she accompanied the Apostle John to Ephesus, where she died in extreme old age. Her assumption into heaven is a comparatively modern legend. *Καὶ σὺν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς αὐτοῦ*—and *with His brethren*. We reserve consideration of the relationship of these brethren to Christ.<sup>1</sup> There are two opinions. The one is, that the word brother is here used to signify near relatives, cousins; and that among these brethren are to be reckoned two of the apostles, James of Alphæus, and Judas of James. The other opinion is, that they were the real brethren of Jesus, being either the sons of Joseph and Mary, or the sons of Joseph by a former marriage, who would be considered as His brethren; and that none of these brethren were apostles. This verse favours, though slightly, the latter view: the brethren of Jesus are here apparently mentioned as a distinct class from the apostles.

Ver. 15. *Καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ταύταις*—and *in those days*, that is, during the ten days intervening between the ascension and Pentecost. *Ἀναστὰς Πέτρος*—*Peter rising up*. Peter here, as well as elsewhere in the early part of the Acts, takes precedence. It is evident that he possessed a certain degree of priority among the apostles. He was honoured by our Lord to be the first to preach the gospel, both to the Jews and to the Gentiles. St. Chrysostom calls him “the mouth of the apostles, and the head of their choir.”<sup>2</sup> But, at the same time, this priority gave him no authority over them. He does not here, in virtue of his primacy, take upon himself the right to fill up the vacancy in the apostolic office, but

<sup>1</sup> See note to Acts xii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Chrysostom's *Lectures on John*, Homily 88, *στόμα τῶν μαθητῶν καὶ κορυφὴ τοῦ χοροῦ*.



brings the matter before the brethren. And it is not the apostles only, but the whole assembly, who agree to the proposal of Peter, and set apart two as fit candidates for the apostolic office.

*Ἦν τε ὄχλος*—*the number of the names together was a hundred and twenty*; that is, the number of persons—the apostles, the women, the brethren of Jesus, and others—then present in the upper room. There is here not the slightest discrepancy, as Baur and Zeller suppose, with the statement of Paul, that our Lord, after His resurrection, was seen of above five hundred brethren at once (1 Cor. xv. 6).<sup>1</sup> On the one hand, Paul does not mention where this appearance took place: most probably it was in Galilee, where the disciples would be more numerous than at Jerusalem. And, on the other hand, Luke does not here give the whole number of the disciples, but only the number present in the upper room. It is probable that this was the whole number then in Jerusalem, and that the Galilean disciples had not yet come up to the feast of Pentecost.

Ver. 16. *Ἀρδεις ἀδελφοι*—*Men and brethren, it was necessary that this scripture should be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas.* The allusion here is to those two passages from the book of Psalms, afterwards mentioned in the twentieth verse. David is there regarded as the type of the Messiah, and the enemies of David as the type of the enemies of the Messiah: and thus all those calamities which David predicted or imprecated as befalling his enemies, were predictions of the calamities which should befall the enemies of the Messiah. David, it is probable, intended only his own enemies; perhaps there was no reference, or only an obscure reference, to the Messiah in his mind: for it is to be observed that it is not said that the scripture should be fulfilled which David foretold concerning Judas, but which the Holy Ghost foretold. These prophecies are examples of what are termed secondary prophecies: primarily they refer to David and to the enemies of David; but in a secondary and higher sense they re-

<sup>1</sup> Zeller's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 117.

ceive their full accomplishment in the Messiah and His enemies.

Ver. 17. "Ὅτι κατηριθμημένος ἦν—for this man was numbered among us, and received the office of this ministry. Literally, the lot (τὸν κλῆρον) of this ministry. This word, however, was used metaphorically to signify the office allotted to a person. St. Peter does not mention the apostleship of Judas in order to aggravate his crime, that he sinned notwithstanding his great privileges, but with a view to the prediction mentioned in ver. 20: "His office (τὴν ἐπισκοπήν) let another take."

Vers. 18, 19. These two verses are by many (Calvin, Kuinœl, Olshausen, Hackett, Humphry) supposed to be not a part of the address of Peter, but an explanatory clause inserted by Luke. It is argued that it was superfluous in Peter to relate the death of Judas, as this fact must already have been well known to the disciples; and that the translation of the word ἀκελδαμάχ would not occur in an address spoken in Aramaic, whereas it was appropriate in a history addressed to Gentile readers. But Peter does not mention the fate of Judas in order to give information to the disciples, but to show that it was the fulfilment of prophecy. Besides, the connective particles μὲν οὖν in ver. 18 forbid us to suppose this clause to be an insertion. And the rhetorical style is that of an address, not of a narrative. Hence we conclude that these verses are part of the address of Peter, and that the only words inserted by Luke are τῇ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ αὐτῶν, and the translation of the Aramaic word Akeldama, τοῦτ' ἔστιν χωρίον αἵματος.

The account here given of the death of Judas is apparently at variance with the account of the same event given by Matthew (Matt. xxvii. 3-8). There are three points of difference. 1. We are here informed that Judas purchased a field with the wages of his crime; whereas Matthew informs us that the chief priests and elders purchased the field with the money which Judas restored. 2. The death of Judas is here described as occasioned by a precipitous fall; whereas in the Gospel we are told that he went and hanged

himself. 3. According to the Acts, the field received its name, "the field of blood," from the violent death of Judas; whereas according to Matthew it was so called because the money with which it was purchased was the price of blood.

The first difference is easily removeable. When Peter says that Judas purchased a field with the wages of his crime, he employs a common rhetorical expression applied to a fact well known to his hearers, meaning that the field was purchased with the money of Judas, the verb being used in a causative sense; in a somewhat similar manner as a man is said to build a house, although actually the house was not built by him, but with his money.<sup>1</sup> In reality, the field was not purchased by Judas, but by the priests with the money which they paid to him.

The second difference relates to the mode of the death of Judas. Peter says that, "falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out;" whereas Matthew says that "he went and hanged himself." The common mode of reconciliation is that first advanced by Casaubon, that Judas went away and hanged himself; but that the rope breaking, he fell down from a considerable height with such violence, that, in the words of Peter, "he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out." But this has too much the appearance of an hypothesis invented to remove a difficulty. It, however, proves this much, that the accounts are not contradictory; because the death may have taken place in the manner supposed, or something similar may have occurred. It is, however, impossible to point out the precise mode of agreement, as we are entirely ignorant of the particular circumstances attending the death of Judas. All that we know is, that his death was one of violence, caused, as Matthew tells us, by his own hands.

The third difference is the reason assigned for the peculiar name of the field. According to Peter, it was called "the field of blood" on account of the violent death of Judas;

<sup>1</sup> For examples of this mode of expression in Scripture, see Wordsworth on the Acts, p. 40.

and according to Matthew, because it was purchased with the price of blood. Some suppose that there are two “fields of blood,”—the one purchased by the price of blood, and the other that where Judas met his death. But only one field is here alluded to, and it is not intimated that Judas met his death in it. There is no improbability in the supposition that the field received its name for a twofold reason; both because it was purchased by blood-money, and because the traitor employed came to a violent end. Meyer observes that there is nothing improbable in the supposition that the name Akeldama was, soon after the death of Judas, formally given by the Sanhedrim to the field purchased by them for a public benefit.

Ἀκελδαμάχ τοῦτ' ἔστιν χωρίον αἵματος—*Akeldama, that is, the field of blood.* The word Akeldama is Aramaic, the language then spoken in Palestine. Jerome says that this field was situated without the wall of Jerusalem, on the south side of Mount Zion, near to the valley of Hinnom. As late as the seventeenth century the supposed Akeldama was used as a burying-place by the Armenian Christians in Jerusalem.

Ver. 20. Γέγραπται γὰρ ἐν βίβλῳ Ψαλμῶν—for it is written in the book of Psalms. There are in this verse two quotations from the Psalms. The first is from Ps. lxi. 25, γενηθήτω ἡ ἔπαυλις αὐτοῦ ἔρημος, καὶ μὴ ἔστω ὁ κατοικῶν ἐν αὐτῇ—*let his habitation be desolate, and let there be no dweller therein.* It varies somewhat from the Septuagint, where it stands, γενηθήτω ἡ ἔπαυλις αὐτῶν ἡρημωμένη, καὶ ἐν τοῖς σκηνώμασιν αὐτῶν μὴ ἔστω ὁ κατοικῶν—*let their habitation be desolate, and let there be no dweller in their tents.* The plural is here changed into the singular, in order that the reference to Judas might be more pointed. This psalm is one of those termed Messianic. It is thrice applied by the sacred writers to Christ. Thus, ver. 9, where it is said, “The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up,” is applied to Christ by St. John (John ii. 17); and the words which follow, “The reproaches of them that reproached Thee are fallen upon me,” are referred to Christ by St. Paul (Rom. xv. 3).

<sup>1</sup> Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 37.



And the remarkable prediction in ver. 21, "They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink," is mentioned by St. John as being fulfilled at the crucifixion (John xix. 28, 29).

*Τὴν ἐπισκοπὴν αὐτοῦ λαβέτω ἕτερος*—*his office let another take.* This second quotation is from Ps. cix. 8, and is given verbatim from the Septuagint. In this psalm David is supposed to refer to Doeg the Edomite, or to Ahithophel. It is the most imprecatory of all the psalms, and may well be termed the Iscariot Psalm. What David here refers to his mortal enemy, finds its accomplishment in the betrayer of the Son of David. It is from this second prediction that St. Peter infers the necessity of filling up the vacancy occasioned by the death of Judas: it was, says he, predicted that another should take his office.

Vers. 21, 22. In these verses Peter assigns the necessary qualifications of the new apostle. He must have associated with them during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them; that is, during the whole of His public ministry. He states the commencement of that period to be the baptism of John, and its termination to be the day of the ascension. That the new apostle should be one of the seventy disciples (Kuinœl), is a probable conjecture. The office of an apostle is here also stated as that of a witness of Christ's resurrection (*μάρτυρα τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ*). The resurrection was the principal fact in the life of Christ to which the apostles had to bear witness; it was the crowning proof of the divinity of His mission, the divine declaration of His Sonship, and that which gave efficacy to His vicarious sufferings and death.

Ver. 23. *Καὶ ἔστησαν δύο*—*and they appointed two*: namely, the assembly appointed them; not Peter, nor the apostles as a body. They do not venture to appoint one, because they would leave the ultimate choice with the Lord. It is impossible to assign the reason why only two, and not more, were proposed as candidates; perhaps a larger and more intimate acquaintance with the Lord might entitle them to a preference.



Ἰωσήφ τὸν καλούμενον Βαρσαββᾶν, ὃς ἐπεκλήθη Ἰούστος — *Joseph called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justus*. This Joseph had two other names. The one, Barsabbas, a name of doubtful import, but probably a patronymic, signifying the son of Sabbas; as Bartholomew is the son of Ptolemy, Barjonas the son of Jonas, etc. The other name, Justus, is a Roman surname, the practice of adopting which was then usual among the Jews. We know nothing about this Joseph, and the attempts to identify him with other scriptural characters are mere conjectures. Ullmann supposes that he is the same as Joses surnamed Barnabas; but Barnabas is not the same as Barsabbas, and he is mentioned in Acts iv. 36 as if he were introduced to the notice of the reader for the first time. Lightfoot and Doddridge think that he might be the same as Joses the son of Alphæus, the brother of James (the Less), and one of the brethren (cousins) of our Lord; but except that this Joses would possess the requisite qualifications, and that his brother James was also called the Just, no reasons are assigned for this opinion. Others think that he was the same as Judas surnamed Barsabbas, mentioned in Acts xv. 22, who accompanied Paul and Barnabas from Jerusalem to Antioch, and who is described as a chief man among the brethren; but the utmost that could be inferred from this statement is, that Joseph Barsabbas and Judas Barsabbas might possibly be brothers. Eusebius states that Papias relates that this Joseph called Barsabbas drank a deadly poison, but through the grace of God experienced nothing injurious (*Hist. Eccl.* iii. 39).

Καὶ Ματθίαν—*and Matthias*. We are equally ignorant about Matthias. All that we know of him is, that he was a disciple of Christ, and a constant attendant on His travels and ministry, from its commencement until His ascension. Some, with that strange perversity which attempts on purely conjectural grounds to identify scriptural characters, suppose him to be the same as Nathanael, because both names signify the gift of God. Eusebius says that he was one of the seventy disciples (*Hist. Eccl.* i. 12),—a tradition probable in itself, and which is also noticed by Epiphanius. According

to Nicephorus, he preached the gospel and suffered martyrdom in Ethiopia (Nicephorus, ii. 40).

Ver. 24. *Καὶ προσευξάμενοι εἶπαν*—*And having prayed, they said.* Peter here probably prayed as the spokesman of the apostles. It is a matter of dispute to whom this prayer was offered. The general opinion is, that Christ is the Lord here addressed. The reasons for this are: 1. The word *Κύριος*, when used absolutely in the New Testament, generally refers to Christ. 2. Jesus is directly called *Κύριος* in ver. 21, and it is to Him that *αὐτοῦ* in ver. 22 applies; and therefore it is most natural that the *Κύριε* of ver. 24 should be referred to Him as the nearest antecedent. 3. The election was that of an apostle of Christ, and the other apostles were all chosen directly by Christ, and so afterwards was Paul. 4. The first Christians were in the habit of praying directly to Christ (Acts vii. 59). This opinion has been called in question by Meyer. He observes that in Acts xv. 7 Peter says expressly of God, that He made choice that the Gentiles should by him hear the word of God; and he there calls God *Καρδιογνώστης*, “who knows the hearts.”<sup>1</sup> But the circumstance to which Meyer refers is not a call to the apostleship, but the call of the Gentiles. And that God is called *Καρδιογνώστης* does not preclude a similar designation of Christ; indeed, Peter himself on a former occasion directly appeals to Christ as acquainted with the heart: “Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee” (John xxi. 17).

Ver. 25. *Εἰς τὸν τόπον τὸν ἴδιον*—*to his own place.* Various meanings are attached to these words. Some (Hammond, Knatchbull) refer them to the successor of Judas—that the person who succeeded might go to his own place, namely the apostleship,—a meaning which is unnatural and tautological. Others, referring them to Judas, interpret them, that he might go to his own house (Keuchen); and others to his own society, namely the Pharisees and the enemies of Jesus (Heinrichs),—meanings at variance with the violent death of Judas, on which Peter insists; and others (Meyer, De Wette), that he might go to the place of punishment—that place

<sup>1</sup> Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 39.

worthy of him, and which he has merited by his crime. And this seems to be the true meaning. This sense is agreeable to the language of the Jews; for the Jewish rabbis thus interpret the passage where it is said that Balaam went to his own place (Num. xxiv. 25), that is, say they, to hell (Lightfoot). The treason of Judas was such an enormous crime, that the hearers of Peter could be in no doubt what was meant by his own place.

Ver. 26. *Καὶ ἔδωκαν κλήρους αὐτοῖς*—*and they cast lots for them.* The lot was employed in Old Testament times for various purposes: 1. The division of land among the tribes of Israel was decided by lot (Num. xxvi. 55; Josh. xviii. 10). 2. In criminal cases, when there was not sufficient evidence the lot was employed (Josh. vii. 14, 18; 1 Sam. xiv. 41, 42). 3. In warlike enterprises, the armies employed were often selected by lot (Judg. xx. 10). 4. In the appointment of persons for important offices, when several appeared to possess equal qualifications, the election was by lot: as the appointment of Saul to be king of Israel, and here the election of Matthias to the apostleship.<sup>1</sup>

From the employment of the lot in the election of Matthias, and from its frequent use under the Jewish dispensation, many have argued in favour of its admissibility. It has, they observe, the sanction of apostolic example. In cases of difficulty, when the reasons on both sides of the question appear equally balanced, and it seems impossible to decide, recourse may be had, after prayer for the divine direction, to the lot. Calvin declares in favour of its use. "Those men," he observes, "who think it to be wickedness to cast lots at all, offend partly through ignorance, and partly they understand not the force of this word. There is nothing which men do not corrupt with their boldness and vanity, whereby it is come to pass that they have brought lots into great abuse and superstition; for that divination and conjecture which is made by lots is altogether devilish. But when magistrates divide provinces among them, and brethren their inheritance, the lot is a thing lawful. Which thing

<sup>1</sup> See Winer's *biblisches Wörterbuch*, art. Loos.

Solomon doth plainly testify when he makes God the governor of the event: 'The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord' (Prov. xvi. 33)."<sup>1</sup> So also Olshausen observes: "Certainly this occurrence—the election of Matthias by lot—will always remain a proof not to be overlooked of the lawfulness of the lot in those cases where a decision needs to be given, and when it transcends the ability of man to discover what is right."<sup>2</sup> The Moravians are the only sect of Christians who recognise the lawfulness of the lot, and employ it in the government of their church.—It must be admitted that this appeal to apostolic practice and scriptural usage has considerable weight, and consequently the use of the lot in difficult questions is not to be at once condemned as unscriptural and superstitious. But, on the other hand, it is to be observed that, under the Old Testament dispensation the Jews were under the immediate government of God, who miraculously interposed in their affairs: and as regards the election of Matthias, the circumstances were so peculiar, that it can hardly be regarded as an example for imitation. We do not find that after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit the disciples had recourse to the lot.

The propriety of the whole transaction—the election of Matthias to the apostleship by the disciples—has been called in question by Stier and others.<sup>3</sup> It was, it is asserted, the duty of the church not to act, but to wait, until by the gift of the Holy Spirit they were endowed with power from on high; the choice of Matthias took place before the Holy Spirit was given, and therefore is to be regarded as a mere human act; Christ indeed intended that the apostleship vacant by the death of Judas should be filled up in accordance with the prediction adduced by St. Peter, but He Himself, and not the church, was to fill up the vacancy; it was Paul, the great apostle of the Gentiles, and not the obscure Matthias, who was the destined successor of Judas; Peter

<sup>1</sup> Calvin on *Acts*, i. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Olshausen on the *Gospels and Acts*, vol. iv. p. 241, Clark's translation. So also Schleiermacher adopts a similar view.

<sup>3</sup> Stier's *Words of the Apostles*, pp. 12–15, Clark's translation.

here acted rashly as on other occasions, and the church was wrongly persuaded by him. Now there is considerable plausibility in this view of the subject. We hear nothing of Matthias: whereas Paul comes prominently forward as a new apostle. But, on the other hand, we think that if the church had here committed a mistake, there would have been some indication in the history to that effect. The comparative obscurity of Matthias equally belongs to the greater number of the apostles. And as to Paul, he seems to have occupied a position distinct from the twelve: they being the apostles of the circumcision, and he the apostle of the uncircumcision. In the words of Lange, "we find not the least trace in Scripture or in the ancient church that this step taken by Peter had been disapproved of. As regards Paul, he himself better understood his position in the kingdom of God. He is contrasted with the apostles of the Jews, as the apostle of the Gentiles; or more exactly, the apostle of progress, as contrasted with the apostles of the foundation."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lange's *Apostolische Zeitalter*, vol. ii. p. 12.



## SECTION III.

### THE MIRACLE OF PENTECOST.—ACTS II. 1-13.

1 And while the day of Pentecost was being fulfilled, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared to them tongues, as of fire, distributed among them, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, according as the Spirit gave them utterance. 5 But there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. 6. Now, when this sound took place, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speaking in his own dialect. 7 And they were amazed, and marvelled, saying, Behold, are not all these who speak Galileans? 8 And how hear we every man in our own dialect, wherein we were born? 9 Parthians and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and the Roman sojourners, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretes and Arabians, we hear them in our tongues, speaking the great things of God. 12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? 13 But others, mocking, said, They are full of sweet wine.

#### CRITICAL NOTES.

Ver. 7. *Πάντες* after *ἐξίσταντο* *δέ*, found in A, C, E, *ς*, but wanting in B, D, several cursive MSS., and versions, is omitted by Tischendorf, Bornemann, and Lachmann. *Πρὸς ἀλλήλους*, found in D, E, is also omitted by Tischendorf and Lachmann, being wanting in A, B, C, *ς*.

#### EXEGETICAL REMARKS.

Ver. 1. *Καὶ ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι*—*And while the day of Pentecost was being fulfilled.* The day of Pentecost is here

marked as the time when the effusion of the Spirit occurred. *Συνπληροῦσθαι* denotes the fulfilment of a certain period. Compare *πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου*, Gal. iv. 4. The reference is to the day itself, not to the completion of the interval between the Passover and Pentecost (Baumgarten, Olshausen). All interpretations which fix upon another day are erroneous; as the opinion of Hitzig, who, rendering the clause, “when the day of Pentecost was approaching its fulfilment,” thinks that the occurrence took place before Pentecost; and the opinion of Lightfoot, who, rendering it, “when the day of Pentecost was completed or past,” thinks that it occurred on the day after Pentecost.

The word Pentecost signifies “the fiftieth.” It was used as a substantive among the Hellenistic Jews to denote one of their three great feasts, and is so employed in the Apocrypha. Thus, “In the feast of Pentecost, which is the holy feast of the seven weeks” (Tobit ii. 1); “After the feast called Pentecost” (2 Macc. xii. 32). So also Joseph. *Ant.* iii. 10. 6. It was so called because it happened on the fiftieth day, calculated from the second day of unleavened bread. In the Old Testament it is called “the feast of weeks,” and “the feast of harvest.” It differed from the other two national festivals, “the feast of the passover” and “the feast of tabernacles,” in being restricted to a single day. These annual festivals were attended not only by multitudes of Jews from all parts of Palestine, but also by Jews from the adjoining countries. “An innumerable multitude,” observes Josephus, “came thither (to Jerusalem at the passover) out of the country, nay, from beyond its limits also, to worship God” (*Ant.* xvii. 9. 2). Even during the raging of the Jewish war this assembling of the Jews at their feasts was not relinquished: for Josephus informs us that Titus laid siege to Jerusalem when it was crowded with pilgrims who had come up to the passover, and who were on a sudden shut up by the Roman army (*Jud. Bell.* vi. 9. 3). The primary object of the feast of Pentecost was to thank God for the blessings of the harvest. It was pre-eminently a joyful feast, a thanksgiving (Deut. xvi. 10, 11). After-

wards it came to be considered as a commemoration of the giving of the law, as it appears from various notices that the law was given from Sinai fifty days after the first passover, or after the departure of the Israelites from Egypt. There is, however, no allusion to the law in the description of this festival either in the Old Testament or in Josephus.

The day of Pentecost was, according to the law of Moses, to be reckoned "from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that the sheaf-offering was made" (Lev. xxiii. 15). This, according to the general opinion among the Jews, was from the day after the first day of the passover week (that day being a holy or sabbatical day), or from the sixteenth of the month Nisan, the passover itself being on the fourteenth day (Lev. xxiii. 5; Joseph. *Ant.* iii. 11. 5, 6); but, according to the Karaites, who reject all traditions and adhere to the Scriptures as the only rule, Pentecost was to be reckoned from the Sabbath in the passover week. The reckoning of the Karaites, however, cannot be traced back to Old Testament times. The season of the year on which this feast occurred was the month of May. The common tradition is that this particular Pentecost, on which the Holy Spirit was given, like the day of the resurrection, occurred on a Sunday. If, as is most probable, the passover was celebrated on the evening of Thursday, the day before the crucifixion, when our Lord partook of it with His disciples, then Thursday would be the fourteenth day of Nisan, and Saturday, or the Jewish Sabbath, the sixteenth day; and consequently the fiftieth day from that, or Pentecost, would occur on a Sunday. According to the method of reckoning employed by the Karaites, Pentecost always happened on a Sunday.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There is, however, a difficulty in these calculations, partly owing to the different commencement of the Jewish day, and partly to the doubtful question from what day the fifty days are to be calculated—whether the sixteenth of Nisan is included or excluded in the calculation. Olshausen observes: "The Jewish Pentecost in the year of our Lord's death fell upon Saturday, but it began at six o'clock in the evening, when the Sabbath was at a close, and it lasted till six o'clock on Sunday evening." Wordsworth gives the following calculation:—

Ἦσαν ἅπαντες ὁμοθυμαδόν—*they were all with one accord.* The persons present are not to be restricted to the apostles (Hammond); nor even to the hundred and twenty disciples who met in the upper room after the ascension; because many of our Lord's numerous followers in Galilee would have come up to Jerusalem to the feast, and would have been present on this occasion.

Ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό—in *one place.* In the next verse we are informed that the place of assembly was a house (τὸν οἶκον). For reasons already stated, we are not here to think of the temple (see note on ch. i. 13). That the third hour, or the hour of prayer, is mentioned by Peter in his discourse (ver. 14), is no proof that the disciples met in the temple; because this assembly would have taken place some time before that hour, as an interval must necessarily have elapsed before Peter addressed the multitude. Neither is the assembling of the multitude, who would be at the temple, any argument, because the wonderful circumstances attending the event would have drawn a crowd together wherever it took place. And the reason that, "as the crowning inauguration of Christ took place in the temple (John xii. 28), so it also behoved to be the case with the founding of the church; that the solemn inauguration of the church of Christ presents itself as an imposing spectacle in the sanctuary of the old covenant" (Olshausen); or that "the new spiritual temple must proceed from the hall of the old temple" (Lange); is wholly fanciful and destitute of all weight. Were the temple the place of meeting, Luke would have mentioned it, and not have left it to be guessed by the reader.

Ver. 2. Καὶ ἐγένετο ἄφνω—and *suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of a mighty rushing wind.* What happened

Thursday, the 14th day of the month Nisan, Christ institutes the holy Eucharist. Friday, the 15th day of Nisan, He was crucified. Saturday, the 16th day of Nisan, He rests in the grave. Sunday, 17th day of Nisan, He rises from the grave. From the end of Saturday, the 16th day of Nisan, forty-nine days are counted; and the fiftieth, or feast of Pentecost, falls on a Sunday.



took place suddenly, unexpectedly (*ἄφνω*). The disciples had, during the ten days which intervened between the ascension and Pentecost, been engaged in incessant prayer, waiting for the promise of the Father; and now, without any previous intimation, this promise was fulfilled. Luke evidently represents this sound from heaven as miraculous in its nature, being the symbol of the Spirit. It was not a mighty rushing wind, but like to it (*ὥσπερ*). We are then to discard all natural explanations, such as a thunderstorm (Renan), a blast (Ewald), or an earthquake attended by a whirlwind, which shook the building in which the disciples were assembled (Neander), as uncoun tenanced by the text, and as unwarrantable attempts to explain away the miraculous.

Ver. 3. *Καὶ ὤφθησαν αὐτοῖς*—*and there appeared to them*; not, *and there was seen on them* (Luther). *Διαμεριζόμεναι*—*distributed. i.e. among the disciples*. Thus Olshausen, De Wette, Meyer, Lechler, Hackett, and Robinson (compare Luke xxii. 17). The meaning is that the flames, in the form of tongues, distributed themselves among those present. The other rendering, *disparted*, or *cloven*, as in our translation (Calvin, Heinrichs, Stier, Alford), is a more unusual sense of the word. According to this view, the tongues presented a fork-like appearance.

*Ἰλῶσαι ὥσεί πυρός*—*tongues as of fire*. As the sound from heaven is not to be explained as a natural occurrence, so neither are the “tongues as of fire.” We cannot then here think of electric lights, which occasionally fix themselves upon pointed objects, such as towers, masts of ships, and even on men (Paulus, Thies): this occurrence took place inside of a house, whereas these phenomena always happen in the open air. Equally to be rejected is the idea of a flash of lightning passing through the room, which the excited minds of the disciples caused them to see in strange forms (Heinrichs, Renan); or that in an ecstatic state they believed that they themselves saw tongues of fire (Heumann).

*Ἐκάθισε τε ἐφ’ ἓνα ἕκαστον αὐτῶν*—*and it sat upon each of them: i.e. not an indefinite object, “something sat upon each*



of them;" nor "the Holy Ghost" (Calvin), which is unintelligible; but "a tongue as of fire." The fire-like tongues were distributed among the assembly, so that one of them sat upon each of the disciples. Doubtless both these appearances—the sound from heaven and the tongues of fire—had a symbolical import. The sound, as of a mighty rushing wind, was a symbol of the mighty power of the Spirit; and its coming from heaven represented its origin. The tongues represented the gift of tongues about to be conferred on the disciples; and their appearance in the form of fire might be intended to denote the zeal and inspiration which were to be kindled in the breasts of the disciples, and to be manifested in their lives.

Ver. 4. *Καὶ ἐπλήσθησαν ἅπαντες Πνεύματος ἁγίου*—and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. Before the day of Pentecost the disciples had received the Holy Ghost, but only to a limited extent; but now the Holy Ghost was poured out upon them in an abundant measure. Yet we must not suppose that the Holy Ghost was bestowed upon them in such a measure as to preclude all increase, or to supersede a gradual growth in grace.

*Καὶ ἤρξαντο λαλεῖν ἑτέραις γλώσσαις*—and they began to speak with other tongues. This was the immediate effect of their being filled with the Holy Ghost. They commenced to utter words in other tongues. The most natural interpretation of this—when taken in connection with what follows—is that they spoke in other languages than their native Aramaic. The word *γλῶσσα* is capable of three significations: 1. The tongue, the organ of speech. Hence some (Bardili, Eichhorn, Wieseler) suppose that the disciples here uttered inarticulate sounds; but it is evident that *γλῶσσα* and *διαλέκτος* are here used in the same sense: the hearers are said to have heard them speak each in his own dialect. 2. An antiquated form of expression (Bleek); as *glossary* is used by us to signify a list of antiquated expressions. This, however, is not the usual, but a rhetorical sense of the word, and besides does not answer the conditions of the phenomenon. 3. Speech or language. This is the only meaning

of the word which suits the passage under consideration. "They began to speak with other tongues," that is, in languages different from their own. Meyer, although he disputes the fact altogether, yet, with his wonted candour, admits that this is the only meaning which the words will here bear. "For the sure determination of what Luke here means," he observes, "it is decisive that *ἐτέραις γλώσσαις* on the part of the speakers was, in point of fact, what the Parthians, Medes, Elamites, etc., designated as *ταῖς ἡμετέραις γλώσσαις*. The other tongues, then, are, according to the text, to be considered as absolutely nothing else than languages which were different from the native language of the speakers. They, the Galileans, spoke Parthian, Median, Persian, etc., and therefore foreign languages; and indeed—the point wherein precisely appeared the miraculous operation of the Spirit—unacquired languages (*γλώσσαις καιναῖς*, Mark xvi. 17). Accordingly, the text itself determines the sense of *γλώσσαις* as that of languages, and excludes as impossible the explanations which differ from this."<sup>1</sup>

*Καθὼς τὸ Πνεῦμα*—according as the Spirit gave them utterance, i.e. in such manner and measure as was granted to them by the Holy Spirit. Their utterances were thus not under their own control, but under the control of the Holy Spirit. They were inspired, in the strictest sense of the term.

Ver. 5. *Ἦσαν δὲ ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ κατοικοῦντες*—but there were dwelling at Jerusalem. *Κατοικοῦντες* is certainly not generally used to denote a temporary residence, but an abiding dwelling; but here, as is evident from the context, it must be taken in a wide sense: for among the hearers are mentioned dwellers (*οἱ κατοικοῦντες*) in Mesopotamia, and Roman sojourners. Probably among those devout men there were not only those who had come to Jerusalem to worship at the feast of Pentecost, but many also who from religious motives had fixed their residence in the holy city.

*Ἰουδαῖοι, ἄνδρες εὐλαβεῖς* — Jews, devout men. They

<sup>1</sup> Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, pp. 49, 50.

showed their devotion by coming from such distances to worship at Jerusalem, and several of them by wishing to spend their last days in the neighbourhood of the temple. Bishop Pearson supposes, with much probability, that at this particular period numerous foreign Jews flocked to Jerusalem, because of the persuasion concerning the near approach of the Messiah.<sup>1</sup>

Ἀπὸ παντὸς ἔθνους τῶν ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανόν—*out of every nation under heaven*. An hyperbolic expression, denoting the wide dispersion of the Jews. The Jews, then as now, were scattered throughout the world. Philo says that “the Jews sojourn in the greater number and in the more prosperous of the cities throughout the provinces and islands of Europe and Asia.” And Josephus represents Agrippa as saying, that “there was no nation upon earth who had not Jews dwelling among them” (*Jud. Bell.* ii. 16. 4). There were three noted dispersions of the Jews. The first was when Shalmaneser settled the ten tribes in the cities of the Medes. The second was the Babylonish captivity, when the Jews were settled chiefly in Mesopotamia. And the third was the colonization of Alexandria and several districts of Egypt with Jews by Alexander the Great and Ptolemy Lagus. In addition to these, vast numbers of Jews had, for the sake of trade, settled in various countries.<sup>2</sup> This dispersion of the Jews was strikingly providential; for by it the knowledge of the true God was disseminated, the expectation of the Messiah became current, and thus men of all nations were in a measure prepared for the reception of Christianity.

Ver. 6. Γενομένης δὲ τῆς φωνῆς ταύτης—*now when this sound took place*. These words have been variously interpreted. According to some (Calvin, Beza), the rumour of the occurrence is meant; as in our version, “when this was noised abroad.” But this would be to take φωνή in the sense of φήμη, a meaning which is doubtful. According to others (Bleek, Kuinöl), the loud voices and speaking of the disciples are meant; but then φωνή would have been in the

<sup>1</sup> Pearson's *Lectures on the Acts*, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> See Du Veil on the *Acts*, p. 36; Cook on the *Acts*, p. 17.

plural, and there is no intimation that the disciples spoke so loudly as to draw together a multitude. Others (Meyer, De Wette, Lechler, Hackett, Alford) translate it *sound*, a common meaning of the word, and refer it to the sound (*ἦχος*) as of a mighty rushing wind; and this appears to be the correct interpretation. The miraculous sound had been heard throughout the city, and had arrested the attention of the worshippers in the temple.

*Συνῆλθε τὸ πλῆθος*—*the multitude came together*. We are not informed by what means the multitude were drawn to the particular house where the disciples were assembled: perhaps the sound issued from the house as a centre, or on its occurrence the disciples may have gone out to the streets and commenced speaking with tongues. To affirm, with Neander, that the shock of an earthquake drove the people from their houses, and occasioned the concourse,<sup>1</sup> is to assert what is not in the text.

*Τῇ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ*—*in his own dialect*. Not properly national language, but dialect; the word being perhaps designedly chosen, as several of the nations afterwards mentioned spoke dialects of the same language. However, the word is not to be taken too strictly, as several distinct national languages are supposed, as Greek, Persian, and Arabic.

Ver. 7. *Οὐκ ἰδοὺ πάντες οὗτοι—Γαλιλαῖοι*—*Behold, are not all these who speak Galileans?* The disciples are here called Galileans, not to denote that they belonged to a particular sect (Eichhorn, Kuinöl); for the name Galilean was not given to Christians until afterwards. Nor is there any reference here to their ignorance or want of culture (Heinrichs). But they are so called on account of their nationality. The Galileans used a particular dialect which distinguished them from the inhabitants of Judea.<sup>2</sup> Thus Peter's mode of speech betrayed him, and at once disclosed the place of his nativity: "Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto"

<sup>1</sup> Neander's *Planting*, p. 17, Bohn's edition.

<sup>2</sup> See Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 58.



(Mark xiv. 70). What astonished the multitude, was to find these men, who were known to be Galileans, speaking in foreign tongues. All the apostles were inhabitants of Galilee, where our Lord principally resided; and by far the greater part of the disciples belonged to the same district of country.

Ver. 8. *Καὶ πῶς ἡμεῖς ἀκούομεν*—and how hear we every man in our own dialect, wherein we were born? The Jews who dwelt in foreign countries had to a great extent lost their acquaintance with their native language, and then, as now, spoke the language or dialect of the countries in which they dwelt. Even the foreign Jews who had taken up their residence in Jerusalem retained their foreign languages, and had separate synagogues where these languages were used. Indeed, it would seem that Greek was at this period very much spoken in Palestine. When Paul addressed the multitude in Aramaic, it seems to be implied that they understood Greek, and were even prepared to listen to a Greek oration (Acts xxii. 2).

Vers. 9-11. In these verses we have a list of the different nations to which the foreign Jews belonged, who heard the disciples speak in their own languages. This list is not to be understood as given by the wondering multitude, but as a historical remark introduced by Luke. The nations also, it is to be observed, are mentioned with respect to their dialects. The first three names, *Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites*, represented portions of the Persian empire. It was among these nations that Shalmaneser, the king of Assyria, settled the ten tribes. *Mesopotamia* is the well-known district between the Euphrates and the Tigris. It was here that the Jews led captive by Nebuchadnezzar were settled. *Judea* is next mentioned, where certainly we would not have expected it, as its language was not foreign to the disciples. Different readings occur in the writings of the Fathers. Theophylact has omitted the word; Jerome reads "Syria;" and Tertullian and Augustine read "Armenia;" but the overwhelming preponderance of authority is in favour of Judea. We do not think that the reason of its insertion



was that it was mentioned from a Roman point of view and for Roman readers (Olshausen); or because the dialect of Judea was different from that of Galilee (Meyer, De Wette, Bengel, Wordsworth); or from a territorial point of view, because Judea lay in the direction followed in the list (Alford); but because Luke would enumerate all the languages which the disciples spoke before the multitude (Hackett). *Cappadocia* was at this time a Roman province. *Pontus*, situated along the borders of the Black Sea, was then governed by chiefs dependent on the Romans, and was reduced to the state of a province in the reign of Nero. By *Asia* here, and in the Acts generally, is to be understood neither the continent of Asia nor Asia Minor, but the Roman province of Asia. When Attalus bequeathed the kingdom of Pergamus to the Romans, they converted it into the province of Asia. It was the coast-line along the Mediterranean, and included the old districts of Ionia, Lydia, Mysia, and Caria, and at times part of Phrygia. Asia was one of the richest of the Roman provinces, containing numerous flourishing cities; its capital and seat of government was Ephesus. *Phrygia* was not then a Roman province, but a district of country which contributed portions to several provinces: at this time the greater part of it belonged to the province of Asia. *Pamphylia* was a small district situated between Cilicia and the Lydian part of proconsular Asia. *Egypt* was inhabited by numerous Jews: so much so, that two-fifths of the population of Alexandria were said to have been Jews (Philo in *Flacc.* p. 973). *Cyrene* was a large city in Libya, a country to the west of Egypt. The Jews there constituted one-fourth of the population (Joseph. *Ant.* xiv. 7. 2); and so many Cyrenian Jews lived in Jerusalem, that they had a synagogue of their own (Acts vi. 9). *Roman sojourners*, that is, Roman Jews who now sojourned at Jerusalem. We learn from Tacitus, that the Jews were so numerous at Rome that they were regarded with jealousy by the government. *Jews and proselytes* refer to all the preceding nations; Jews by birth, and proselytes, converts from heathenism. *Cretes*, the inhabitants of the island of

Crete, where the Jews were very numerous. *And Arabians*, among whom, as their country bordered on Judea, there must have been numerous Jews.

De Wette declares that this catalogue of names is inaccurate and unmeaning. Many of the nations mentioned spoke the same language: in Mesopotamia and Judea, Aramaic was spoken; in the states of Asia Minor, in Egypt, Cyrene, and Crete, Greek; and in Rome itself, Greek was generally known.<sup>1</sup> But although many of these nations spoke the same language, yet each doubtless had its own dialect, and it is especially of dialects (*διάλεκτος*) that Luke speaks. De Wette himself mentions that the Parthians, Medes, and Elamites spoke different though cognate languages.

Ver. 11. *Τὰ μεγαλεῖα τοῦ Θεοῦ*—*the mighty things of God*. The disciples praised God in these different languages; thus offering to Him, on this the birthday of the new creation, the homage of all nations, the hallelujah of the human race.

Vers. 12, 13. The effect upon the multitude was twofold. Some were impressed, and became inquirers: "They were amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others, mocking, said, They are full of sweet wine." Meyer supposes that these scoffers belonged to the hierarchical party of the Jews—the enemies of Christ. Others (Lightfoot, Alford, Wordsworth, Hackett) think that they were natives of Judea, who, not understanding that the disciples spoke in foreign languages, imagined that they only uttered incoherent words. It is probable that there was something in the excited manner in which the disciples acted, and in their ejaculations of praise in foreign languages, which would appear to the unsusceptible as fanaticism (compare 1 Cor. xiv. 23). *Γλεύκους*—*sweet wine*. This word denotes a certain kind of sweet wine used in the East which was very intoxicating.

<sup>1</sup> De Wette's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 27.

## ON THE GIFT OF TONGUES.

We have deferred the particular consideration of this interesting and difficult subject until we had concluded our exegetical remarks on the text. As we have already observed, the obvious meaning of the passage under consideration is, that the disciples were miraculously endowed with the faculty of speaking in foreign languages. The word *γλώσσα* in this connection can only denote language; and *ἐτέραις γλώσσαις* can only mean other languages than those known to the disciples. The assembled multitude were confounded, because every man heard his own dialect spoken; they were amazed, because those who thus spoke were known to be Galileans; and a long list of nations is given who heard, in their own tongues, the wonderful works of God. Now, were this the only place where the gift of tongues is mentioned, there would be little difficulty in understanding what is meant by it. But the subject becomes in no small degree complicated when we compare the phenomenon of Pentecost with the description of the gift of tongues given us in other parts of Scripture, and especially in 1 Cor. xiv.

The following are the other notices which we have in Scripture of this gift. Our Saviour, after His resurrection, mentions among the signs that should follow those who believed, that they should speak with new tongues (Mark xvi. 17). When Cornelius and his company were converted, the Holy Ghost fell on them as on the disciples at Pentecost (Acts xi. 15), and they spoke with tongues, and magnified God (Acts x. 46). When Paul laid his hands on the Ephesian disciples who had only been baptized unto John's baptism, "the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues, and prophesied" (Acts xix. 6). Paul, in enumerating the gifts of the Spirit, mentions among them as distinct gifts, "kinds of tongues," and "the interpretation of tongues" (1 Cor. xii. 10). And especially, in the fourteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, the gift of tongues is dwelt upon at length. Paul there speaks of

“diversities of tongues,” and of “speaking and praying in tongues.”

There is some variety in the names which this gift bears in the New Testament. In our passage it is called *ἐτέραις γλώσσαις λαλεῖν*; in Mark's Gospel we find *καιναῖς γλώσσαις λαλεῖν*; in Acts x. 46, xix. 6, and in 1 Cor. xiv., it is simply *γλώσσαις* or *γλώσση λαλεῖν*. St. Paul also speaks of *γένη γλωσσῶν* (1 Cor. xii. 28) and *γλώσση προσεύχεσθαι* (1 Cor. xiv. 14).

We shall at present restrict ourselves to the occurrence on the day of Pentecost, and inquire how it has been understood by various writers.

1. And, first, let us attend to the natural explanations which have been given of it by critics of the rationalistic school. It is supposed by them that the disciples were not all Galilean Jews; but that among them there were several foreign Jews who addressed the multitude in their own languages, so that all the foreigners in Jerusalem heard the gospel in their own tongues. This is the theory adopted, with some variations, by Paulus, Kuinœl, Heinrichs, and Thiess. But, not to mention that this opinion charges the historian with an attempt at deception—for he certainly gives us the impression that the disciples spoke in languages strange to them—it is exposed to unanswerable objections. It is extremely improbable that there should at this time have been a number of foreign Jews among the disciples, as it was not until after Pentecost that the Christian community extended itself. Besides, this opinion would remove all cause of wonder, because, according to it, every man spoke in his own language. And such a use of their native tongue could not be called a gift of the Spirit. In short, every attempt to remove the miraculous in this manner, and to explain the phenomenon by assuming that the disciples spoke in their native languages, is directly against the nature and words of the narrative, and is now generally rejected by critics of every school.

2. Another opinion, more common in ancient than in modern times, is that which converts the miracle of speaking



into a miracle of hearing. The disciples, it is said, did indeed speak in their own languages; but, the foreign Jews, by a spiritual sympathy, believed that they heard them speak in their own tongues. Thus, according to this view, Peter indeed addressed the multitude in Aramaic, but to one hearer the words sounded as Greek, to another as Arabic, and to a third as Persian. This opinion was advanced by Cyprian, Gregory of Nyssa, and Bede, among the Fathers, by Erasmus at the time of the Reformation, and in more recent times by Martensen and Schneckenburger. Billroth supposes that there is a primitive language, and that this was made known by the Spirit to the disciples, and that each of the hearers thought they found their own dialect in it. But such an opinion is not borne out by the narrative. It does not agree with the declaration that the disciples spoke with other tongues. It would transfer the miracle of Pentecost from believers to unbelievers. And, besides, it would be practising a deception upon the hearers, leading them to think that they heard what they actually did not hear: the words which sounded in their ears as Greek, Arabic, or Persian, being in reality Aramaic.

3. A third hypothesis is, that the speaking with tongues was merely incoherent utterances—jubilant expressions. This opinion was advanced by Bardili and Eichhorn, although they applied it only to 1 Cor. xiv. They defended their opinion by an appeal to 1 Cor. xiv. 7, 8, where speaking with tongues is compared to the indistinct sounds of instruments. Bunsen also held a similar opinion. So also Wieseler thinks that, when the disciples spoke with other tongues among themselves (Acts ii. 4), soft, unintelligible whisperings are meant, similar to the phenomenon described in 1 Cor. xiv.; but that when they addressed the multitude, the second stage, or the interpretation of tongues, is meant—that the speakers explained their unintelligible utterances. But such a hypothesis would divest the narrative of the miraculous, and degrade the whole phenomenon into a species of fanaticism. Luke leaves on us the decided impression that the words spoken were not inarticulate utterances, but that



the hearers understood what was said. And in the passage it is evident that *γλῶσσα* and *διάλεκτος* are interchanged.

4. Another opinion is, that by other tongues is meant poetical, antiquated, unusual, provincial, and foreign expressions; that we are to think of a discourse not in foreign languages, but in expressions which were strange to the language of common life, and in which there were several phrases borrowed from foreign dialects. This opinion was advanced and supported with great erudition and ability by Bleek. He founds his argument chiefly on the peculiar meaning given to *γλῶσσα* by rhetoricians, namely an antiquated expression. But such a meaning is unknown in the Septuagint and in the New Testament. Besides, it cannot be made to correspond with the phenomenon in question. How, on this view, could the Parthians, Medes, Elamites, etc., affirm that they heard the disciples speak each in his own language? Bleek himself is constrained to acknowledge that, "although all other passages of the New Testament in which this gift is mentioned might appear favourable to his hypothesis, yet the history of Pentecost is not so."<sup>1</sup>

5. A very common opinion, maintained in a variety of forms, is that the gift of tongues was not an actual speech in foreign languages, but ecstatic utterances spoken in a high state of inspiration, and often destitute of intelligible meaning. The mind of the inspired was raised above its natural powers, and received impressions of new truths, or was filled with such joyful emotions, that the man felt it impossible to express in ordinary language his views and feelings, and hence resulted a speaking with tongues. This opinion is chiefly defended by an appeal to 1 Cor. xiv. But however much it may seem to agree with the gift of tongues there described, it is irreconcilable with the gift of tongues on the day of Pentecost. It may be that the utterances of the disciples were words of praise, and in this sense ecstatic; but then they were spoken in foreign tongues, and the hearers understood them. There is not the least intimation given that they were unintelligible, but the reverse. Accordingly,

<sup>1</sup> See Olshausen *on the Gospels and Acts*, vol. iv. p. 259.

Meyer modifies the hypothesis : he combines it with that of Kuinoel and the Rationalists. He supposes that the utterances were indeed ecstatic, and in general unintelligible ; but that among the disciples, who were for the most part Galileans, there were also a few foreigners, and that they naturally expressed their ejaculations not in the acquired Galilean dialect, but in their mother tongue. He further supposes that Luke, in describing the phenomenon as a miraculous speech in foreign languages, adopted a distorted report.<sup>1</sup> But this explanation is a wholly unwarrantable attack on the sacred text ; not a solution, but a cutting of the knot—an attempt to get rid of the miraculous in the narrative.

6. A modification of this hypothesis of ecstatic utterances has recently been advanced by Dr. Plumptre. He does not think that the disciples spoke languages with which they were previously unacquainted ; but merely in a state of ecstasy uttered foreign expressions of praise and joy, in words which they had formerly heard, and which were now brought vividly to their recollection. “In all likelihood,” he observes, “such words as they then uttered had been heard by the disciples before. At every feast which they had ever attended, from their youth up, they must have been brought into contact with a crowd as varied as that which was present on the day of Pentecost, the pilgrims of each nation uttering their praises and doxologies. The difference was, that before the Galilean peasants had stood in that crowd neither hearing, nor understanding, nor remembering what they heard, still less able to reproduce it ; now they had the power of speaking it clearly and freely. The divine work would in this case take the form of a supernatural exaltation of the memory, not of imparting a miraculous knowledge of words never heard before.”<sup>2</sup> But this ingenious hypothesis does not recommend itself to us as the true solution : it is not naturally suggested by the narrative. The miracle is there distinctly represented as one of other

<sup>1</sup> Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, pp. 53, 54. The opinion of Neander is somewhat similar.

<sup>2</sup> See Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, art. Gift of Tongues.

tongues—the gift of speaking the languages of Parthians, Medes, Elamites, etc., not the mere exaltation of the memory.

7. The only hypothesis which suits all the conditions of the case, is that of an actual speech in foreign and previously unacquired languages; a miraculous gift of tongues, so that the disciples were enabled to speak Persian, Arabic, Latin, etc. This opinion is adopted, though variously maintained, by Baumgarten, Olshausen, Lechler, Kahnis, Schaff, Bäumlein, and Wordsworth. Various objections, however, against this view of the subject have been advanced.

It is considered to be inconceivable and contradictory. “The sudden communication,” observes Meyer, “of an ability to speak in foreign languages is neither logically possible, nor psychologically and morally conceivable, and we do not find the least trace of it in the apostolic epistles or elsewhere.”<sup>1</sup> So also Alford, to whose particular view we shall afterwards advert, remarks: “Such an endowment would not only be contrary to the analogy of God’s dealings, but, as far as I can see into the matter, self-contradictory, and therefore impossible.” But it is no argument against the reality of the miracle, that we cannot conceive how men should speak in foreign languages which they have never learned: it may have taken place, although we are utterly ignorant of the mode of its occurrence. The gift of tongues is manifestly exhibited as a miracle, and it is of the nature of a miracle that it cannot be explained by ordinary principles. As it is not an impossibility to learn a foreign language, so we do not see how it can be considered impossible and contradictory that a language should be impressed on the mind without previous study. Miracles frequently consist in the compression of much labour and time into a small space. As, for example, our Saviour converted water at once into wine; whereas, in the natural order, water has to go through a variety of forms and processes before it is so changed. So, in the natural order, the acquirement of a language occupies much time and study; but, for all that we see, this time and study may be miraculously dispensed with.

<sup>1</sup> Meyer’s *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 51.

Again, it is objected that this hypothesis of speaking foreign languages is opposed to Acts xiv. 11. It is there asserted that Paul, who spoke with tongues more than all the Corinthian disciples (1 Cor. xiv. 18), did not understand the dialect of Lycaonia. Now, taking for granted that this is the correct meaning of the passage, it is to be observed that the gift of speaking in foreign languages need not have been permanent; it was only "as the Spirit gave them utterance." Paul, for example, had the gift of healing; yet he could not exercise this gift on all occasions, for in his Second Epistle to Timothy he mentions that he had left Trophimus at Miletum sick; and in his Epistle to the Philippians he speaks of Epaphroditus being sick nigh unto death.

But the great objection to this speaking in foreign languages is, that however much it agrees with the miracle of Pentecost, it apparently disagrees with the description of the gift of tongues given by Paul in 1 Cor. xiv. There the speaking with tongues was unintelligible to the hearers: he that spoke in an unknown tongue, spoke not to men, but to God, for no man understood him: the man often could not interpret what he himself said; an interpreter was necessary to explain what was spoken, and sometimes there was no interpreter present in the assembly: the gift is compared with the tinkling of a cymbal, the indistinct sound of an instrument, and the speech of a barbarian: Paul himself spoke with tongues more than they all, but he says that he would rather speak five words with his understanding, that he might teach others, than ten thousand words in a tongue; and he forbids any to speak with tongues in the church, unless there be an interpreter. Now, certainly there does appear to be a difference between this speaking with tongues and that mentioned in the Acts. Both were spiritual gifts—supernatural manifestations; in both the mind of the speaker was controlled by the Spirit; both are described as speaking with tongues—*γλώσσαις λαλεῖν*. But the speech of the disciples at Pentecost was directly intelligible to the hearers; whilst the speech of the Corinthians



required the medium of an interpreter to be understood. The speaking at Pentecost was evidently a speaking in foreign languages; whilst it is not so evident that this was the case with the converts at Corinth.<sup>1</sup>

Alford attempts to reconcile these two phenomena. He supposes that the disciples at Pentecost were merely the mouthpieces of the Spirit—they spoke only as the Spirit gave them utterance; that they did indeed speak in foreign languages, but that they did not themselves understand what they said; that they were moved to the utterance of certain sounds dictated by the Holy Spirit, but that these sounds were perfectly intelligible to the foreigners who heard them in their own languages. Or, as he expresses it: “I believe the event related in our text to have been a sudden and powerful inspiration of the Holy Spirit, by which the disciples uttered, not of their own minds, but as mouthpieces of the Spirit, the praises of God in various languages, hitherto, and possibly at the time itself, unknown.”<sup>2</sup> Hence the necessity of an interpreter to explain what was said, as the speaker himself was ignorant of what he uttered. Such a reconciliation is ingenious, and the explanation given may possibly apply to the gift of tongues mentioned in 1 Cor. xiv.; but there is nothing in the account given us in the Acts which would lead us to suppose that the disciples did not understand what they said.

Others (Thiersch, Lechler) suppose that Acts ii. and 1 Cor. xiv. describe phenomena which, although in many points similar, coming under the same category, yet have peculiar differences. According to them, in Acts ii. there was a real and actual power of speaking in foreign languages conferred on the disciples. They utter the praises of God, so that the Parthians, Medes, and Elanites understood them, each in his own language. Whereas in 1 Cor. xiv. there was no speaking in foreign languages, but a high state of rapture and inspiration; an exaltation of soul; a state of holy ecstasy, perhaps similar to that which Paul

<sup>1</sup> Lange's *Bibelwerk*: *Apostelgeschichte*, von Lechler, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. ii. pp. 13, 14.



experienced when, being caught up to the third heavens, he heard unspeakable things, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. And corresponding with this difference there is a difference of expression : in Acts ii. the disciples are said to speak with *other* tongues ; whereas in 1 Cor. xiv. there is only mention of speaking with tongues.<sup>1</sup> According to this view of the subject, the gift of tongues at Pentecost was unique in its nature. Its purpose was not to enable the disciples to address the foreign Jews in their own languages ; for there is no mention that they discoursed in them, but merely that they declared the wonderful works of God. It was rather designed to call attention ; to excite the spirit of inquiry among the multitude ; to arouse their curiosity. It also gave authority to the disciples : it invested the doctrines which they declared with all the weight of inspiration. It was, so to speak, the bell which called the people to worship, and the credentials which God Himself gave to His messengers.

This explanation, though not wholly satisfactory, especially regarding the gifts of tongues in 1 Cor. xiv., seems to come nearest to the probable truth. The phenomenon at Pentecost was a miraculous indication of the arrival of the heavenly gift, and a manifestation of its power ; and being a miracle, it is hardly to be expected that we shall be able to apprehend the *modus operandi*. A solution of the question in this sense cannot be looked for. Only this is to be remembered, that we must receive the Scripture as it stands ; and on the one hand, not explain away the natural meaning of the language ; nor, on the other, put meanings into it which it cannot bear.

We are probably to understand the occurrence somewhat as follows :—When the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the disciples, they were endowed with the gift of tongues : they spoke foreign languages which they had never acquired, at first among themselves (Acts ii. 4). A multitude assembled around the house where they were : the disciples went

<sup>1</sup> See this difference between the phenomenon at Pentecost and the speaking of tongues in the Corinthian church well stated by Thiersch in his *History of the Apostolic Church*, translated by Carlyle, pp. 62, 63.

out to them, speaking in these languages; and each foreigner, to his surprise, heard his own language spoken by those whom he knew were Galileans. It is certainly not to be supposed that each disciple spoke a multitude of languages (Bleek); but that one spoke in one language and another in another, so that every foreign Jew heard spoken the wonderful works of God "in his own tongue wherein he was born." Whether the disciples actually discoursed to the multitude in foreign languages, or whether the words which they uttered were the ecstatic expressions of praise to God (τὰ μεγαλεῖα τοῦ Θεοῦ), cannot be determined from the narrative.

The common opinion is, that the gift of tongues was bestowed upon the disciples to assist them in the propagation of the gospel. They were commissioned to preach the gospel to all nations; and to enable them to execute this commission, they were promised by our Lord the gift of new tongues (Mark xvi. 17); and at Pentecost, when the Spirit was given, this promise was fulfilled.<sup>1</sup> Others, however, think that such an opinion goes beyond the information given us in Scripture. The testimony of the Fathers is ambiguous. Irenæus speaks of those who had prophetic gifts, and spoke through the Spirit all kinds of languages (παντοδαπαῖς λαλούντων διὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος γλώσσαις).<sup>2</sup> But with the exception of this testimony, until the time of Chrysostom there is no mention that such a power was exercised by the apostles. Of course, little stress can be put upon the tradition of Papias, mentioned by Eusebius, that Peter was accompanied on his travels by Mark as his interpreter;<sup>3</sup> but it shows that the primitive church did not consider the gift of tongues as a permanent endowment to fit the apostles for preaching the gospel. Nor, it may be added, was such a gift so necessary as it would be to missionaries in the present day. In the providence of God, the civilised world was united into one mighty empire and one language, the Greek;

<sup>1</sup> See this opinion ably supported by Bishop Wordsworth, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 44, 45.

<sup>2</sup> Irenæus, *adv. Hær.* v. 6; Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* v. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 39.

or at the most, two, the Greek and the Latin, formed the medium of communication throughout the empire.<sup>1</sup> In all the countries which Paul visited in his extensive missionary journeys, Greek alone sufficed. It may indeed be objected that the power to speak, and especially to write Greek, must necessarily have been miraculously conferred on the Galilean apostles; but there appear in their writings, especially in their use of Hebraisms, indications that it was in all probability acquired by them according to natural laws; at least their speaking and writing Greek is not a proof that that language was miraculously conferred on them, especially considering that it was at this period extensively used in Palestine. Not only John, Peter, and James, but also Josephus, wrote in Greek.<sup>2</sup>

Various phenomena have occurred in the Christian church analogous to this speaking with tongues: such as the ecstatic prayers and prophecies of the Montanists in the second century, of Fox and his disciples and of the French prophets in the seventeenth, and especially the so-called "unknown tongues" of the Irvingites in the nineteenth. These, however, cannot be considered as supernatural phenomena in the sense of miraculous, but are mere imitations of the gift of tongues mentioned in Scripture; and with regard to many of them, although certainly not the result of imposture, were the effects of a contagious religious fanaticism. Certain it is, that in none of these instances was there an actual speaking of foreign languages such as occurred on the day of Pentecost.

<sup>1</sup> "Aramaic, Greek, Latin, the three languages of the inscription on the cross, were media of intercourse throughout the empire." "The conquests of Alexander and of Rome had made men *diglottic* to an extent which has no parallel in history."—DR. PLUMPTRE.

<sup>2</sup> See Merivale's *History of the Romans*, ch. xxix. He observes: "The prevalence of the Greek language even in Jerusalem itself is marked by an interesting circumstance recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. On the occasion of a riot which was excited in that city through the jealousy which existed between the Oriental and Greek Jews, Paul addressed the multitude: 'When they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue, they the more kept silence;' from which it appears that they would have listened to him, and understood him, even if he had spoken in Greek."

## SECTION IV.

### THE DISCOURSE OF PETER AT PENTECOST.—Acts II. 14–36.

14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and addressed them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye dwellers in Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words : 15 For these men are not drunken, as ye suppose, for it is the third hour of the day. 16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet : 17 “It shall be in the last days, saith God, that I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh ; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams : 18 And on my servants, and on my handmaids, I will pour out in those days of my Spirit ; and they shall prophesy : 19 And I shall give wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath ; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke : 20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and illustrious day of the Lord come : 21 And it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” 22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words : Jesus the Nazarene, a man approved of God among you by powers, and wonders, and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves know : 23 Him, being delivered up according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, having crucified by the hand of lawless men, ye have slain ; 24 Whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be holden by it. 25 For David says with reference to Him, “I saw the Lord always before me ; for He is on my right hand, that I be not moved : 26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad ; moreover also, my flesh shall rest in hope : 27 Because Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, nor give Thy Holy One to see corruption. 28 Thou hast made known to me the ways of life : Thou wilt make me full of joy with Thy countenance.” 29 Men and brethren, I may speak to you with freedom of the patriarch David, because he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is among us unto this day. 30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, one should sit on his throne ; 31 He, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of Christ, that He was not left in Hades, neither did His flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus did God raise up, of which we all are witnesses. 33 Therefore, being by the right hand of



God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He shed forth this which ye see and hear. 34 For David is not yet ascended into the heavens: but he says, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on my right hand, 35 Until I make Thy foes Thy footstool." 36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God made Him both Lord and Christ, even this Jesus whom ye have crucified.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

Ver. 16. Ἰωήλ· καὶ is found in A, B, C, E,  $\aleph$ , but is wanting in D; and is omitted by Tischendorf and Lachmann, surely for insufficient reasons. Ver. 23. λαβόντες, D, E, is wanting in A, B, C,  $\aleph$ , and is rejected by Tischendorf. Instead of χειρῶν, E, Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Bornemann read χειρός, after A, B, C, D,  $\aleph$ . Ver. 30. The words τὸ κατὰ σάρκα ἀναστήσειν τὸν Χριστόν are wanting in A, B, C,  $\aleph$ , and are rejected by Mill, Griesbach, Lachmann, and Tischendorf. Ver. 31. Ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ, found in E, is wanting in A, B, C<sup>1</sup>, D,  $\aleph$ , and is omitted by Griesbach, Lachmann, Meyer, and Tischendorf. Ver. 33. Griesbach, Lachmann, Bornemann, and Tischendorf have omitted νῦν before ὑμεῖς, as it is wanting in A, B, C<sup>1</sup>, D,  $\aleph$ .

## EXEGETICAL REMARKS.

Ver. 14. Σταθεὶς δὲ Πέτρος σὺν τοῖς ἑνδεκά—*But Peter, standing up with the eleven.* The disciples were accused of drunkenness, and Peter commences his address by vindicating them from that charge. Peter stood up with the eleven, in their company, and speaking in their name. As Neander remarks, "Peter came forward with the rest of the eleven; and as the apostles spoke in the name of the whole church, so Peter spoke in the name of the apostles."<sup>1</sup> *The eleven*—as Matthias now supplied the place of Judas. *Ye men of Judea*—native Jews. *All ye dwellers in Jerusalem*—foreign Jews and proselytes, dwellers and sojourners in Jerusalem. Peter would address the multitude in Aramaic, as this language would be most generally understood.

<sup>1</sup> Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. p. 18, Bohn's edition.

Ver. 15. *Οὐ γὰρ — οἱ τοὶ μεθύουσιν*—*for these are not drunken.* The persons referred to (*οἱ τοὶ*) are not the apostles, to the exclusion of the disciples; for all were alike charged with drunkenness. De Wette, on the other hand, supposes that the disciples only are meant, and not the apostles. "Peter," he observes, "defends not himself and his colleagues, but the other disciples (*οἱ τοὶ*): it thus appears that the apostles had not the gift of tongues,—a proof that this speaking with tongues was a low kind of spiritual speech."<sup>2</sup> But this is an evident mistake: Peter here speaks in the third person, not to exclude himself and the other apostles, but as if he were an impartial advocate to defend his fellow-disciples from the accusations of the multitude.

*Ἔστι γὰρ ὥρα τρίτη τῆς ἡμέρας*—*for it is the third hour of the day.* The division of the day into twelve hours—a mere conventional division—was unknown among the Jews until the Babylonish captivity. The first mention of it is in the book of Daniel. Before that, the periods of the day were distinguished by natural appearances, as morning, noon-day, and evening. Herodotus informs us that the Babylonians were the first to divide the day into twelve parts. According to the Hebrews, the civil day was reckoned from sunset to sunset, and the natural day from sunrise to sunset. This natural day was divided into twelve equal parts, and the length of each hour would of course vary according to the season of the year, being proportionally longer in summer and shorter in winter. The third hour, then, was about nine in the morning, or more correctly, the middle space between sunrise and noon: it was the hour of morning prayer. The Jews had three hours of prayer—namely, in the morning, or the third hour (Acts ii. 15), when the morning sacrifice was offered; at noon, or the sixth hour (Acts x. 9); and in the evening, or the ninth hour (Acts iii. 1, x. 30), the period of the evening sacrifice. Peter gives it as a reason why the disciples were not drunken, "because it was the third hour of the day." We learn from Josephus and other Jewish writers, that on Sabbaths and festivals it was un-

<sup>1</sup> De Wette's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 37.

usual for the Jews to eat or drink until the hour of morning prayer had expired (see Joseph. *Vita*, 54; Lightfoot's *Horæ Hebraicæ*, vol. iv. p. 29). And, generally speaking, drunkenness was a vice which courted the shades of night: "They that are drunken are drunken in the night" (1 Thess v. 7). So that what the apostle insists upon is the extreme improbability of such a number of persons being drunken at so early a period of the day.

Vers. 16–21. The quotation from the prophecy of Joel (in the Hebrew, ch. ii. 28–30; in the Septuagint, ch. iii. 1–5) is taken, with a few slight variations, from the Septuagint. The chief variations are the following: Instead of ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις (ver. 17), the Septuagint has μετὰ ταῦτα, in which it agrees with the Hebrew. The two last clauses of ver. 17 are in the Septuagint transposed. In ver. 18 the words καὶ προφητεύσονται are added; and in ver. 19 ἄνω and κάτω are wanting in the Septuagint.

Ver. 17. Ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις—in the last days. This in the Septuagint is μετὰ ταῦτα, after these things. Kimchi asserts that these two phrases signify the same thing, for he has this note upon the passage in Joel: "‘And it shall be after these things’ is the same as ‘And it shall be in the last days.’"<sup>1</sup> The phrase "the last days" occurs in the Old Testament (Isa. ii. 2; Mic. iv. 1), and is a Jewish form of expression to denote the days of the Messiah. This era was so called because it was the last dispensation of religion; and as the Jewish dispensation then came to an end, the phrase is also occasionally used to signify the last days of the Jewish church. Generally, however, it signifies the age of the Messiah, comprehending all the events that occurred in that age. Compare 2 Tim. iii. 1, "In the last days perilous times shall come;" Heb. i. 2, "God hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son;" 1 John ii. 18, "Little children, it is the last time." Ἐκχεῶ ἀπὸ τοῦ Πνεύματός μου—I will pour out of my Spirit: in the Hebrew it is, I will pour out my Spirit. Olshausen supposes that in the discourse of Peter a powerful but yet partial effusion of

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot's *Horæ Hebraicæ*, vol. iv. p. 30.

the Spirit is intended; whereas the prediction of Joel, in its original form, as given in the Hebrew, still remains for the future, when there shall be a complete effusion of the Spirit. But this appears far-fetched: the quotation exactly agrees with the Septuagint. *Ἐπὶ πᾶσαν σάρκα*, *on all flesh*; that is, on all kinds of men, without distinction of sex—sons and daughters; of age—young men and old men; and of condition—servants and handmaids. Joel may have had respect only to Israel; but Peter here regards Israel as the people of God, and extends the prophecy to all believers in Christ. He himself had indeed at this time very imperfect views as to the admission of the Gentiles into the Christian church; but doubtless, in the intention of the Spirit, the phrase is without distinction of nations—Jews and Gentiles. *Καὶ προφητεύουσιν*—*and they shall prophesy*. All were to prophesy: the gift of prophecy was not to be confined to a few distinguished persons, as under the Old Testament dispensation, but was to extend to all believers (compare Jer. xxxi. 34). The special reference here is to the speaking with tongues. *Ὁράσεις*, *visions*, revelations in the day-time; *ἐνυπνίοις*, *dreams*, revelations at night. These were the two usual modes in which God communicated His will under the Old Testament dispensation (Num. xii. 6).

Ver. 18. *Ἐπὶ τοὺς δούλους μου καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς δούλας μου*. In the original Hebrew it is, *upon the servants and upon the handmaids*, that is, upon slaves. Here and in the Septuagint it is, *upon my servants and upon my handmaids*. The addition of *μου* does not permit us to explain it of those who are in a servile condition, in accordance with the original text (Heinrichs and Kuinocl); for the service is here referred to God as the great Master. The Spirit is to be poured upon those who are His servants and His handmaids; in other words, on all true Christians, inasmuch as they recognise God as their Master.

Ver. 19. Wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath, are here stated as what would happen in the last days—the portents of the dreadful calamities which would occur. The earthly signs are blood, fire, and vapour of



smoke. By these we are not to understand, with Meyer, natural signs—bloodshedding (fire, sedition, and murder) and conflagration; but rather, with De Wette, supernatural wonders and signs—prodigies: αἶμα, showers of blood; πῦρ, fiery meteors; ἀτμίδα καπνοῦ, pillars of smoke rising from the earth. In the somewhat similar words of our Lord, with reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, “Fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven” (Luke xxi. 11).

Ver. 20. The signs from heaven are: “*The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood;*” i.e. the light of the sun shall be withdrawn, and the moon shall exhibit a bloody appearance. The words of our Lord are similar, and equally strong: “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken” (Matt. xxiv. 29). Πρὶν ἢ ἐλθεῖν τὴν ἡμέραν Κυρίου—*before the day of the Lord come*; i.e. before the day of Christ come. This advent of Christ is not to be understood of His first coming in the flesh, but rather of His second coming to judgment; but in such a manner that every infliction of judgment is to be regarded as a coming of Christ, the Judge. For example, He came in Spirit when Jerusalem was destroyed: the Roman soldiers were His ministers.

Ver. 21. The prophecy concludes with a universal invitation: *Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved*. The Lord mentioned is evidently, according to the apostle, Christ—Jesus, the crucified and the exalted, who has been manifested to be both Lord and Messiah. The invitation is universal; there is no exception, no hindrance: all flesh (πᾶσα σὰρξ) is mentioned; and whosoever is included under this general appellation is invited.

Such is the exegesis of the prophecy. But the question is, How did Peter understand it? And how are we to understand it? What did the spirit of prophecy intend by it? Evidently Peter wished to show to the Jews that the effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and the

miraculous events with which it was accompanied, were a fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel. According to this point of view, “the last days” is the present period—the age of the Messiah commenced; the effusion of the Spirit is the outpouring on the day of Pentecost; the prophesyings, the visions, and the dreams, are the utterances with other tongues. The calamities predicted—the wonders in heaven above, and the signs in earth beneath—were indeed as yet future; but they were regarded by Peter as unavoidable and impending. The day of the Lord was come, and vengeance was about to befall His enemies.

But although the prophecy of Joel had special relation to the day of Pentecost, yet it was not completely fulfilled on that day. It embraces periods and events far distant from each other in time; it is a comprehensive statement of what will occur in the “last days.” By many it is restricted to the destruction of Jerusalem; and certainly in that great event, in the overthrow of the Jewish religion and polity, it received a striking fulfilment. Then, not only according to our Saviour’s prediction, but also according to Josephus, there were fearful sights and great signs from heaven, not inappropriately denominated “blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke.” But as, according to the phraseology of our Saviour in His prediction of that event, there is a manifest reference to the day of judgment, to the end of the world, of which the destruction of Jerusalem was the type, so there is also a like reference in this similar prophecy of Joel. In short, we believe that not only at Pentecost, but on every great historical crisis, at every striking effusion of the Spirit, and at every convulsion among the nations, this prophecy of Joel receives a partial fulfilment; but that its complete fulfilment is yet in reserve, when the world will have nearly come to its close, and when the awful judgment of God—that great and illustrious day of the Lord—is about to take place.

Ver. 22. *Ἰησοῦν τὸν Ναζωραῖον*—*Jesus the Nazarene*. Peter names Jesus as the Lord upon whom they shall call. He calls Him the Nazarene, that is, a native of Nazareth, not as being a term of reproach applied to Him by His

enemies (Calvin), or because such was the title affixed to the cross (Beza), but for the sake of distinction, being His ordinary designation among the Jews (Acts iii. 6), as Jesus was a common name. *A man approved of God among you*—that is, proved to be the Messiah, divinely accredited by the miracles He wrought; as Nicodemus justly argued: “We know that Thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him” (John iii. 2). *By powers, and wonders, and signs*—three terms expressive of the miracles which Jesus wrought: *powers*, because they were the effects of supernatural power; *wonders*, as being works out of the ordinary course of nature; and *signs*, as being the credentials of Christ—the proofs that He was sent from God.

Ver. 23. *Τοῦτον τῇ ὀρισμένῃ . . . ἔκδοτον*—*Him, being delivered up according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.* The apostle, in referring to the death of Christ, views it with respect to God and man. With respect to God, he declares that it was in accordance with His counsel and foreknowledge. (The words are in the dative of accordance; see Acts xv. 1: Meyer, De Wette, Winer.) *Ἐκδοτον*—*delivered up*: by whom, is left undetermined; perhaps a reference to the treachery of Judas. The apostle intends that what happened to Jesus was not the mere result of successful wickedness, but was in full accordance with the fixed plan of God: that all had been previously foretold by the prophets in their predictions of the Messiah.

Next follows man's part in the transaction: *διὰ χειρὸς ἀνόμων*—*by the hand of lawless men.* By lawless men here are meant the heathen who were without the law (Rom. ii. 14), and particularly Pilate who condemned Christ, and the Roman soldiers who nailed Him to the cross. *Προσπῆξαντες*—*fastened, affixed, or nailed* to something: the cross is presupposed as known; *σταυρῶ* has consequently to be supplied. *Ἀνείλατε*—*ye have slain.* Peter here charges the multitude with being the murderers of Jesus. But wherefore? Doubtless there were many of those foreign Jews who were not in Jerusalem on the day of the crucifixion;

and though some then present may have joined in the cry, “Crucify him,” yet all were not thus guilty. Olshausen’s opinion, that the reason was because the crucifixion of Christ was the deed of the human race, inasmuch as it was the sin of mankind that brought Jesus to the cross, though doctrinally true, is far-fetched. Rather Peter regards it as the sin of the Jewish nation, because it was the sin of their rulers, with the full consent and approbation of the multitude; as when they exclaimed, “His blood be upon us, and upon our children.”

Ver. 24. *Λύσας τὰς ὠδῖνας τοῦ θανάτου*—*having loosed the pains of death*. There is considerable difficulty in the interpretation of this expression. Olshausen supposes that the word *ὠδῖνας* is to be taken in the sense of cords, bonds, snares; as “the snares of death” is translated in the Septuagint, *ὠδῖνες θανάτου* (Ps. xviii. 5). Such an interpretation gives a distinct meaning to the passage. Still, however, it is doubtful whether *ὠδὶν* is ever used in this sense. Meyer supposes that death itself is here represented as in travail, until the dead is raised; then these pains cease—they are loosed; and because God has raised up Christ, He has loosed the pains (birth-pangs) of death. It is, however, more natural to refer the pains to Jesus, than to conceive death itself being in pain. The meaning would seem to be, that death was regarded as a painful condition, because the body was threatened with corruption; and that consequently these pains were loosed when the body was raised and delivered from corruption (Lechler).

Vers. 25–28. This quotation is from Ps. xvi. 8–11 (xv. 8–11 according to the Septuagint). It is taken verbatim from the Septuagint, and varies very slightly, and not at all in sense, from the Hebrew original.

Ver. 25. *Προορώμην* does not signify “I foresaw,” in the sense of to see beforehand; but to see before oneself, to have a vivid view of an object; similar in sense to the Hebrew, “I have set the Lord always before me.”

Ver. 26. *Therefore did my heart rejoice*—the heart being considered the seat of the will and affections. *And my*



*tongue was glad.* Instead of *my tongue*, the Hebrew has *my glory*, probably a free translation in the Septuagint. *Moreover also, my flesh shall rest in hope*: by which the Psalmist expresses his hope of final deliverance; or, as applicable to the Messiah, and as interpreted by Peter, in hope of the resurrection.

Ver. 27. *Because Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades*—in the abode of the dead—the state of separate spirits. *Nor give Thy Holy One to see corruption*—permit Thy Holy One to suffer the corruption of the grave. In an historical sense, these words can with difficulty be referred to David, as if he meant that God would not suffer him to die in his present peril (Meyer); a meaning which evidently comes far short of the expressions employed. They must be regarded as a direct prophecy of the Messiah, applicable to Him alone.

Ver. 28. *Thou hast made known to me the ways of life*—the paths which lead to life. *Thou wilt fill me with joy with Thy countenance*—in fellowship with Thee. According to the meaning attached to this by St. Peter, it refers to the resurrection of the Messiah, by which God made known to Him the ways of life; and to His ascension to heaven, where there is fulness of joy in the immediate presence of God. We are not left to ourselves to discover the interpretation of this quotation from the Psalms, as Peter himself interprets it in the verses which follow.

Ver. 29. Ἐξὸν (sc. ἐστὶ) εἰπεῖν μετὰ παρρησίας πρὸς ὑμᾶς—I may speak to you with freedom. By these apologetic words the apostle introduces what he is to say concerning David: he may speak with freedom, because he was to state a matter of fact which could not be denied. The fulfilment of the prophetic words in another and greater than David did not detract from that illustrious prophet and king. Περὶ τοῦ πατριάρχου Δαβὶδ—concerning the patriarch David. David is here called by the honourable title of patriarch, because he was the father of the royal family, and because the Messiah was to descend from him. The name is applied in the New Testament to Abraham (Heb. vii. 4), and to the sons of Jacob (Acts vii. 8).

*Καὶ τὸ μνῆμα αὐτοῦ . . . ταύτης*—*and his sepulchre is among us until this day.* David was buried in the city of David (1 Kings ii. 10), that is, Mount Zion; and most of the Jewish kings were interred in the same sepulchre. After the return from Babylon, “the sepulchres of David” were still pointed out (Neh. iii. 16), and doubtless repaired. Josephus informs us that, one thousand and three hundred years after the death of David,<sup>1</sup> his sepulchre was pillaged by the high priest John Hyrcanus, who took out of it three thousand talents, being part of the treasure which Solomon had lodged in it; and that after him Herod the Great opened another chamber, and took away a great amount of money (Joseph. *Ant.* vii. 15. 3, xiii. 8. 4). Elsewhere, however, he states that Herod, on opening the sepulchre, found no money, but furniture of gold and precious goods; and that in attempting to make a more diligent search, two of his guards were killed by a flame which burst out upon those who went in (Joseph. *Ant.* xvi. 7. 1). The whole account certainly looks like an exaggeration. In the time of Hadrian the sepulchre of David had fallen into decay (Dion Cassius, lxi. 14). Jerome mentions its ruins as extant in his time. The edifice now shown as such is on the hill on the south side of Jerusalem, supposed to be Mount Zion, and is probably not far from the spot.

Vers. 30, 31. In these verses we have the application of the prophecy to Christ. David, observes the apostle, did not speak of his own resurrection, seeing that he is dead and buried; but as a prophet, and the divinely assured ancestor of the Messiah, he foretold the resurrection of Christ. He had been divinely informed, that of the fruit of his loins one should sit upon his throne (Ps. cxxxii. 11); and with a prophetic view of this, recognising this heir as the Messiah, he spoke of the resurrection of Christ, that He should not be left in Hades, neither should His flesh see corruption. And the very same inference is drawn from this psalm by Paul: “Wherefore He saith in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer

<sup>1</sup> The date given by Josephus. The proper reckoning is about 880 years.

Thine Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: but He whom God raised again saw no corruption" (Acts xiii. 35-37). The argument of these two apostles is obvious: David says, "Thou shalt not suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption;" but to David himself these words cannot apply, for he died and saw corruption: they must therefore apply to another, to the Messiah, the Son of David.

But how did David understand these words? Did he, when he uttered them, speak of himself, or of some other person? It is evident from the nature of the case, and from the words of Peter (1 Pet. i. 10-12), that the prophets had only a dim apprehension of the meaning of their prophecies; but still, without doubt, David had a prophetic knowledge of that illustrious Son of his who was to sit upon his throne, and did connect Him with the idea of the Messiah: and thus, like Abraham, though dimly, he saw Christ afar off. In this psalm he utters sentiments which can be applicable to none else than the Messiah; and especially in the quotation which Peter next gives, he expressly distinguishes between himself and that illustrious Prince: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at my right hand" (Ps. cx. 1).

Ver. 32. *Οὗ πάντες ἡμεῖς ἐσμὲν μάρτυρες*—of which we all are witnesses. *Οὗ* may be regarded either as masculine or neuter. If masculine, then the translation is, *whose witnesses we are*; if neuter, then it refers to Christ's resurrection. This latter is preferable; as the apostles considered themselves to be especially the witnesses of His resurrection (ch. i. 22).

Ver. 33. *Τῇ δεξιᾷ οὖν τοῦ Θεοῦ ὑψωθεῖς*. This has been variously translated. Some (Olshausen, De Wette, Hackett, Wordsworth) render it, *exalted to the right hand of God*,—a sense which perhaps agrees best with what follows in ver. 34, but which, however, is hardly in accordance with the structure of the Greek language. Meyer observes, that the construction of verbs of motion, with the dative instead of with *πρός* or *εἰς*, is found in classical writers only among the poets,

though such a usage occurs in later writers ; but there is no undoubted instance of such a construction in the New Testament.<sup>1</sup> The words, then, are to be rendered, *exalted by the right hand of God* (Lechler, Meyer, Winer, Alford). The objection of De Wette, that such a sense is inappropriate and unmeaning, is groundless : on the contrary, it gives an obvious sense, that God's mighty power is seen not only in the resurrection, but also in the exaltation of Christ. *Ἐξέχεε τοῦτο*—*He has shed forth this*. *Τοῦτο* is probably to be understood indefinitely—*this thing* which ye do see in the conduct and hear in the discourses of the disciples : so that Peter leaves it to the hearers themselves to infer that this miraculous communication was the same as the promise of the Spirit.

Vers. 34, 35. This second quotation is from Ps. cx. 1 (cix. 1 in the Septuagint). It is taken verbatim from the Septuagint, which is an exact translation of the Hebrew. Our Lord cites the same passage as a proof that David owned his inferiority to the Messiah. “How doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on my right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool ? If David then called Him Lord, how is He his son ?” (Matt. xxii. 43–45.) The words are a direct prophecy of the Messiah. They cannot apply to David, not only because, as St. Peter says, “David hath not yet ascended into the heavens,” but because David expressly distinguishes himself from the person spoken of, and owns Him as his King. This King, then, is the illustrious son of David, the Messiah ; and His session at the right hand of God is His ascension. Certainly the idea conveyed by this is, that Christ is made a partaker of the divine power and glory, which He could only be by reason of His divine nature : it is, however, the mediatorial throne which is here primarily intended, and to which He, as Lord and Christ, is exalted.

Ver. 36. *Ἀσφαλῶς οἶν γνωσκέτω*—*Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly*. The conclusion of the entire

<sup>1</sup> Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, pp. 70, 71. See also Winer's *Grammar*, sec. xxxi. 5.



discourse. From the correspondence of the resurrection and ascension of Christ with the sure word of prophecy, the inference is undoubted (ἀσφαλῶς) that Jesus is the Messiah. *Κύριον καὶ Χριστόν*—*Lord and Christ*. *Lord*, the Supreme King; *Christ*, the Greek for Messiah. Peter would assert, as the conclusion of his whole discourse, that Jesus was that illustrious King and Prophet whom the Jews so eagerly expected. Whilst on earth He was both Lord and Christ; but then He was in the form of a servant: but by His resurrection and ascension He is openly declared to be so. *Τοῦτον τὸν Ἰησοῦν ὃν ὑμεῖς ἐσταυρώσατε*—*even this Jesus whom ye have crucified*. So the discourse ends in the most emphatic manner, well fitted to pierce the hearers to the heart with a sense of their guilt and danger: as if the apostle had said, Ye have not only committed the awful crime of crucifying your Messiah; but He whom you have crucified is now your Lord and Judge: you are helpless in His hands.

It is to be observed on this whole discourse of Peter, that although he mentions the miracles of Jesus—His “powers and signs and wonders”—and especially the crowning miracle of His resurrection, yet he does not put the chief stress of his argument upon them. He argues not from miracles, but from prophecies. He proves from the prophecy of Joel, that the present effusion of the Spirit was predicted as an event that should occur in the days of the Messiah; and from two passages from the Psalms, he shows that the risen and exalted Jesus was the Messiah, because it was predicted of the Messiah that He should rise from the dead and ascend into heaven. And the reason of this line of argument was because Peter’s hearers were Jews: they believed in the prophecies concerning the Messiah; and therefore the fulfilment of these prophecies in the person of Jesus was to them a convincing proof of His Messiahship. The whole discourse of Peter must, to a Jewish mind, have been most conclusive, and have carried home to their hearts the conviction, that God had made that same Jesus whom they had crucified both Lord and Christ.

## ON THE NATURE OF HADES.

We have deferred until now the consideration of Hades, that place in which the Psalmist predicted the soul of the Messiah would not be left, and in which Peter tells us Christ was not left. "Ἅδης is a well known Greek term, signifying the invisible state, the infernal regions, the abode of the dead. It is derived from α, privative, and ἰδεῖν, to see—that which is not, and cannot be seen. In the Septuagint it is the translation of the Hebrew שְׁאוֹל, Sheol, a word of the same import. According to Hebrew scholars, Sheol is derived from a word signifying a *hollow*. So also the German *Hölle*, and the English *hell*, have probably a similar derivation. Now, however, these words have quite a definite meaning, signifying the place of the punishment of the wicked after the judgment; a meaning which it is questionable if Hades and Sheol ever bear. There is no appropriate word in English to express what is meant by Hades: it would have been perhaps better to have left it untranslated. In Latin, *infernus* is a tolerable translation. In German, De Wette suggests *Unterwelt*, and Lechler more appropriately renders it *Todtenreich*.

The word Ἅδης occurs eleven times in the New Testament; in ten places (Matt. xi. 23, xvi. 18; Luke x. 15, xvi. 23; Acts ii. 27, 31; Rev. i. 18, vi. 8, xx. 13, 14) it is translated *hell*, and in one place (1 Cor. xv. 55) *grave*. The translation *hell* is peculiarly unfortunate, as the idea conveyed by Hades is different from the future state of punishment. For this another word, γέεννα, is usually employed in the New Testament. Sheol, again, is variously rendered *hell* and *the grave*. In some places the grave is its obvious meaning; as in Gen. xlii. 38, 1 Sam. ii. 6, Ps. cxli. 7. In one place (Ps. ix. 17) it would seem to denote the future state of punishment, hell properly so called. In the New Testament, however, the meaning of Hades approximates to the Greek idea of that word, as the state of the dead in general, where the righteous are happy and the wicked miserable.

The Greeks termed the place of the blessed Elysium, and the abode of the miserable Tartarus, both being regions of Hades. In the New Testament the former word does not occur, Paradise being perhaps used in its stead (Luke xxiii. 47). The latter term, Tartarus, is however employed by St. Peter when he says, "God cast down the angels which sinned to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment" (2 Pet. ii. 4), where the word employed is *ταρταρώσας*: they are confined in Tartarus, as in a prison, waiting for the judgment. "Αδης, then, signifies the abode of the dead, the separate state: when the body is conceived as without the soul, it is equivalent to the grave; and when the soul is conceived as without the body, it is what is termed the intermediate state—the state intervening between death and the resurrection. The souls both of the righteous and the wicked are in Hades, though considered as in different regions: the former inhabiting the region of the blessed, or Paradise; the latter being confined in the dungeon of Tartarus.

Hades is represented as situated in the lower parts of the earth. Hence the depth of Hades is contrasted with the height of heaven (Matt. xi. 23; Luke x. 15). It is also regarded as an abode; and hence we read of the house of Hades, the gates of Hades (Matt. xvi. 18), and the keys of Hades (Rev. i. 18). It is the inseparable companion of death (Rev. vi. 8). And after the judgment Hades shall be no more: it and its companion Death shall be cast into hell (Rev. xx. 13, 14). In Luke xvi. 23, where it is said that the rich man lifted up his eyes in Hades, being in torment, the idea of a place of punishment is certainly intended; but this is Tartarus, not hell. Both Lazarus and the rich man were in Hades; the one in the mansions of the blessed, and the other in those of the wretched.

In the passage under consideration, where it is said that Christ's soul was not left in Hades—unhappily rendered in our version hell—the meaning is, that His soul was not left in the abode of separate spirits, even as His body did not remain in the grave. Some, indeed, suppose that Hades

and the grave mean the same thing, and that by the soul of Christ is to be understood Himself; so that when it is said that "His soul was not left in Hades, neither did His flesh see corruption," the same sentiment is twice expressed by different phrases. But, as Principal Campbell well observes, "we ought never to recur to tautology for the solution of a difficulty, unless where the ordinary application of words admits of no other resource."

It is doubtless from this passage of Scripture that the article in the Apostles' Creed, "Christ descended into hell," was derived. All that can be inferred from this passage is that at death the soul of Christ was separated from His body: that whilst His body was in the grave, His soul was in Hades, the abode of separate spirits; or, as He Himself terms it, Paradise, the abode of the blessed.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For discussions on the nature of Hades, see Smith's *Biblical Dictionary*, art. Hell; Trench on the *Parable of the Rich Man*; and especially Principal Campbell's valuable dissertation.



## SECTION V.

### EFFECTS OF PETER'S DISCOURSE.—ACTS II. 37-47.

37 Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" 38 Then Peter said to them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you on the name of Jesus Christ, in order to the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, as many as the Lord our God shall call. 40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted, saying, Be ye saved from this perverse generation. 41 Then they, having received his word, were baptized: and in that day there were added about three thousand souls. 42 And they continued stedfastly in the doctrine of the apostles, and in fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together, and had all things common; 45 And sold their possessions and goods, and distributed them to all, as every one had need. 46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did take their food in gladness and singleness of heart, 47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily the saved.

### CRITICAL NOTES.

Ver. 41. *Ἀσμένως* after *οὖν*, found in E, is omitted in A, B, C, D, *ς*, and rejected by Tischendorf and Lachmann. Ver. 42. *Καί* before *τῇ κλάσει* is omitted in A, B, C, D, *ς*, and rejected by Bornemann, Lachmann, and Tischendorf. Ver. 47. *Τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ*, found in D, E, is wanting in A, B, C, *ς*, and several versions. It is rejected by Mill, Bengel, Lachmann, and Alford, but is retained by Griesbach, Lechler, Meyer, and Tischendorf.

## EXEGETICAL REMARKS.

Ver. 37. *Κατενύγησαν τὴν καρδίαν*—*they were pierced to the heart.* The hearers of Peter's discourse were deeply affected by it. They were convinced that Jesus, whom they had crucified, was indeed Lord and Messiah. They felt that they had committed the awful crime of putting to death the Lord's Anointed; and hence they were filled with remorse. And they felt also that they were exposed to the divine wrath—that they were completely in the power of Him whom they had murdered; and hence they became alarmed under a sense of danger. Their remorse and fear, however, had not the effect, as in the cases of Cain and Judas, of driving them from God, but of causing them to make immediate application to Peter as the chief spokesman, and to the rest of the apostles, for advice. What shall we do? How can we escape the punishment to which our crime exposes us? Calvin well observes: "Luke doth now declare the fruit of the sermon, to the end we may know that the power of the Holy Ghost was not only showed forth in the diversity of tongues, but also in the hearts of those who heard."

Ver. 38. *Μετανοήσατε*—*repent.* The verb *μετανοέω* is not to be restricted to mere sorrow for sin—repentance in the sense of contrition; but it imports a change of views, mind, and purpose, and a consequent change of disposition—repentance in the sense of conversion. Here Peter's hearers are required to change their views concerning Jesus. From regarding Him as an impostor, a false Christ, they were now to believe on Him as the true Messiah, and to submit themselves to Him as their Lord and King. With this change in their views, there would be a corresponding change in their feelings. *Μετανοήσατε*, then, denotes a change in an ethical sense, as the immediate moral condition of their baptism; not, as the Roman Catholics in the Douay version translate it, from dogmatic views, *do penance*,—a meaning which it can never bear.

*Καὶ βαπτισθήτω*—*and be baptized.* The rite of baptism is here supposed as known. The Jews were accustomed to

baptize proselytes and their children, so that it was not to them a new institution. Besides, John the Baptist seems to have created a considerable sensation in Judea. And although Jesus Himself did not baptize, yet His disciples baptized under His direction. This is the first instance recorded of the performance of Christian baptism. Peter's hearers were exhorted not only to repent, but to submit to the ordinance of baptism as the initiatory rite of the Christian dispensation. They must make a public profession of their belief in Jesus as the Messiah, as an evidence of the reality and sincerity of their repentance.

*Ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*—*on the name of Jesus Christ, i.e. on the ground of the name of Jesus the Messiah*, so that their belief in Jesus as the Messiah was the ground on which they were to be baptized. This is the only place where to be baptized on the name (*ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι*) of Christ occurs. Elsewhere it is "into the name (*εἰς τὸ ὄνομα*) of the Lord Jesus" (ch. viii. 16, xix. 5); that is, into a profession of the religion of Jesus—into a belief of the doctrines which He taught. So also "in the name (*ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι*) of the Lord" (ch. x. 68) occurs. Whether the express words of the institution (Matt. xxviii. 19) were employed, we are not informed; most probably they were, as being given directly by Christ: all that we are here informed, is the ground on which the converts were baptized.

*Εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν*—*in order to the remission of sins*. The end or design of their baptism: in order that their guilt in putting to death their Messiah might be forgiven. This may be regarded as the negative side of the blessing. The positive side is, that they might receive the gift of the Holy Ghost—that the promise foretold by the prophet Joel might be fulfilled in their experience.

Ver. 39. *Ἔμιν γάρ ἐστιν ἡ ἐπαγγελία*—*for the promise is to you*. The promise here referred to is the well-known promise of the Holy Ghost; that promise which Joel predicted as the characteristic of the days of the Messiah, and which our Lord designated as the promise of the Father (Acts i. 4). It refers to the miraculous gifts which were then conferred

on the early church ; but certainly it also includes the sanctifying influences of the Spirit.

*Καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις ὑμῶν*—*and to your children* : either to your little ones (Alford), or to your posterity (Hackett). The promise not only embraces and refers to those Israelites who are now present, but it stretches itself to the future—to the posterity of Israel. By the rite of circumcision, the children of the Israelites were included in the covenant : this privilege is not done away with by Christianity, but on the contrary confirmed—the children are included in the promise.

*Καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς εἰς μακρὰν*—*and to all that are afar off*. It is a matter of dispute who are here intended. Baumgarten and Meyer refer it to place—all those who are situated at a distance ; that is, to all the members of the Jewish nation who neither dwell here at Jerusalem, nor are now present as pilgrims to the feast, both Hebrews and Hellenists.<sup>1</sup> Hence, according to this opinion, the Jews of the dispersion are meant. But they are already obviously included in the promise, as being Jews ; and, besides, were now represented by Jews being present out of every nation under heaven (Acts ii. 5). Accordingly Beza and others refer it to time—to all those who are at a distance in point of time. According to this, the meaning would be : The promise is not only to you, but also to your remotest posterity. But this idea is already included in the expression “to your children.” Most (Calvin, De Wette, Bengel, Kuinöl, Lechler, Lange, Alford) refer the expression to the Gentiles. According to this, Peter affirms that the promise is not confined to the Jews and their descendants, but that it also extends to the Gentiles. The expression *afar off* is used, both in the Old and in the New Testament, to represent the Gentiles. Thus Zechariah says : “They that are afar off shall come and build in the temple of the Lord” (Zech. vi. 15) ; and Paul uses a similar expression, when, addressing his Gentile converts—those who were in times past Gentiles in the flesh—he says, “Now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood

<sup>1</sup> Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 74.



of Christ" (Eph. ii. 11–13). The great objection to this view is, that Peter was as yet ignorant of the admission of the Gentiles into the Christian church, and that he required a special revelation to remove his prejudices (Acts x.).<sup>1</sup> But to this it may be answered, that Peter's ignorance was not concerning the fact, but concerning the mode, of the admission of the Gentiles. That the Gentiles were to be received into the church was already revealed in the Old Testament, and could not have been unknown to Peter. Indeed, Christ Himself had commanded the apostles to preach the gospel to all nations. Peter, then, did not doubt that the Gentiles would become Christians, but he supposed that they would become so through the medium of the Jewish religion: as yet, he knew nothing of the abrogation of Judaism.

Ver. 40. Σώθητε ἀπὸ τῆς γενεᾶς τῆς σκολιᾶς ταύτης—*Be ye saved from this perverse generation.* Peter here exhorts them to save themselves from that wicked Jewish generation which was doomed to destruction—to separate themselves from it by repentance and baptism. Σκολιός, *crooked*, as opposed to straight (Luke iii. 5); and so rendered with a moral reference in Phil. ii. 15: "in the midst of a crooked (σκολιᾶς) and perverse nation." Hence *perverse* or *wicked*. The phrase is probably borrowed from Deut. xxxii. 5: "a perverse and crooked generation;" in the Septuagint, γενεὰ σκολιὰ καὶ διεστραμμένη.

Ver. 41. Οἱ μὲν οὖν ἀποδεξάμενοι . . . ἐβαπτίσθησαν—*Then they, having received his word, were baptized.* On the same day in which they believed—during the course of it—the sacrament of baptism was administered to three thousand. This must necessarily have been by sprinkling, and not by immersion—when we consider the number baptized, and the scanty supply of water which then was at Jerusalem. Baptism by immersion of so great a number, and in so short a space of time, could not have been administered without the consent of the Jewish rulers, which we may be perfectly certain would not have been obtained. It is also to be observed that

<sup>1</sup> See Davidson's *New Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. ii. p. 227.

baptism was administered to this multitude without any previous instruction : all that was required of them was a profession of their repentance, and of their belief in Jesus as the Messiah : instruction in the nature of Christianity did not precede baptism, but followed it. Hence, as Olshausen observes, “we may see that it was not dogmas (as a preparation for baptism) upon which the apostles laid stress, but the disposition and bent of the mind.”

Ψυχὰὶ ὥσεὶ τρισχίλιαι—*about three thousand souls.* From the great number of those converted, we must suppose either that Peter did not merely preach a single sermon, but addressed several groups ; or, what is more probable, that whilst Peter was preaching, the other apostles and disciples were engaged in the same duty, with the same happy results.

Ver. 42. In this verse we have the rudiments or outlines of the worship of the primitive and apostolic church. There are four points mentioned, and each may be considered as a distinct act of worship—the apostolic doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers.

Τῇ διδαχῇ τῶν ἀποστόλων—in the doctrine of the apostles. That is, the disciples, or perhaps specially, the newly converted, diligently attended to the instructions of the apostles. This διδαχὴ would consist chiefly in the correspondence of the life and death of Jesus with the prophecies concerning the Messiah in the Old Testament ; and in the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, so far as they were at this time revealed to the apostles. That after this time the apostles themselves made a further progress in doctrine, appears from the new views which they received in regard to the admission of the Gentiles into the Christian church, and to the abolition of the Jewish rites and ceremonies.

Καὶ τῇ κοινωνίᾳ—and in fellowship. The precise idea to be attached to this term has been much disputed. Some (Pearson, Mede) refer it to what follows, and conjoin it with the breaking of bread, either *in communion, namely the breaking of bread* ; or *in communion of the breaking of bread*. The Vulgate gives the last sense—in *communicatione frac-*

*tionis panis.* The spuriousness of *καί* before *τῇ κλάσει* prevents us adopting the first meaning; and the structure of the Greek language will hardly permit us to accept the second. Others suppose that the communion itself, the Lord's Supper, is intended; but this peculiar sense of the word *κοινωνία* does not seem to have been employed until the fourth century, though certainly suggested by 1 Cor. x. 16. Most biblical critics (Olshausen, Kuinöl, Baumgarten, Lechler) understand by it liberality to the poor; as the word frequently signifies *communication* to others, *distribution*. But to this Meyer objects that this peculiar sense requires to be indicated by a special clause, or to be undoubtedly inferred from the context, as in Rom. xv. 26, Heb. xiii. 16; that *κοινωνία* does not in itself signify *communicatio*, but *communio*; and that it is only from the context that the idea of liberality instead of fellowship can be inferred, which is not here the case.<sup>1</sup> Neander understands it of the social intercourse which the disciples had with one another,—a meaning which the word fully bears. The objection, however, to this is, that the word is here evidently used in a religious sense, as an act of worship. We therefore agree with Meyer, De Wette, and Bengel in referring it to the religious fellowship which the disciples had with each other. The word is similarly employed in Phil. i. 5, where the apostle renders thanks to God on behalf of the Philippians for their fellowship in the gospel.

*Τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου*—*in breaking of bread.* The interpretation of this clause is still more difficult. The common opinion is, that the Lord's Supper is meant either by itself, or accompanied by the Agapæ, or love-feasts. The phrase occurs several times in the New Testament. Thus it is said that Christ manifested Himself to the disciples at Emmaus in "breaking of bread" (Luke xxiv. 35), where certainly there is no reference to the Lord's Supper. In ver. 46 of our chapter, it is said that the disciples broke bread from house to house; where the idea conveyed must be the same as in the verse under consideration. In Acts xx. 7, 11, it is said

<sup>1</sup> Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 75.

that the disciples came together to break bread, and that they broke bread, and ate; where, from the context, the phrase evidently denotes some act of Christian worship. And Paul, in referring to the Lord's Supper, uses the expression "the bread which we break" (1 Cor. x. 16).—Here the phrase denotes some act of Christian worship, as in Acts xx. 7, 11. Some (Doddrige, Grotius) suppose that it means that the disciples took their meals in common, and that this was done in a religious spirit; that there is no reference here to the Eucharist, but only to feasts similar to the Agapæ. Others (De Wette, Olshausen, Meyer, Hackett) suppose that in the apostolic church, the Agapæ were accompanied by the celebration of the Eucharist, after the example of the last supper of our Lord; and that, accordingly, the phrase "breaking of bread" does not mean the Agapæ or the Lord's Supper exclusively, but both conjoined. And certainly from the statements of Paul, in reference to the manner in which the Lord's Supper was celebrated in the church of Corinth, there seems to be ground for this supposition. This, however, would infer that the first disciples daily partook of the Lord's Supper (ver. 46), which appears extraordinary according to our views of the ordinance.

In most Christian churches of our day there is nothing resembling the love-feasts (*ἀγάπαι*) of the early Christians. That there were such feasts in the apostolic times is undoubted. They are directly mentioned in the Epistle of Jude (Jude 12), and most probably alluded to by Peter (2 Pet. ii. 13). It would appear that the members of the Christian church partook of their food in common, probably on the first day of the week (Acts xx. 7), when the rich brought provisions for the entertainment of their poorer brethren; and that the feast was either preceded or concluded by the celebration of the Eucharist. A description of the Agapæ is furnished to us by Tertullian. "Our feast," he says, "shows its character by its name; it bears the Greek name of love: and however great may be the cost of it, still it is gain to be at cost in the name of piety,



for by this refreshment we make all the poor happy. No one sits down at the table till prayer has first been offered to God ; we eat as much as hunger requires, we drink no more than consists with sobriety : while we satisfy our appetites, we bear in mind that the night is to be consecrated to the worship of God. The supper being ended, and all having washed their hands, lights are brought in, and every one is invited to sing, either from Holy Scripture or from the promptings of his own spirit, some song of praise to God for the common edification.”<sup>1</sup> It was the abuse of the Agapæ that gave rise to those extraordinary disorders that prevailed in the Corinthian church at the celebration of the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. xi. 20–22). And in consequence of frequent abuse, the Agapæ were forbidden by the Council of Laodicea (A.D. 320) and other ecclesiastical councils to be held in churches, so that they gradually fell into disuse.

*Kaì taîs προσευχαῖς*—*and in prayers*. This fourth particular requires no explanation. Prayers, probably including praise, are an essential part of worship. Meyer observes that the plural may denote different kinds of prayers, which were partly new Christian prayers restricted to no forms, and partly the Psalms and the ordinary Jewish prayers, especially those which referred to the Messiah and His kingdom.

Ver. 43. We have here the impression which was produced upon those who did not become believers. A sense of fear came upon them : though not actually converted, they were impressed with a reverential respect toward the disciples. And this would be confirmed and deepened by what is related concerning the activity of the apostles : *and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles*—probably miracles of healing were performed by them.

Ver. 44. *Ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό*—*together*. This does not refer merely to unanimity of spirit, but intimates that they met or assembled together. The vast number of the disciples is no objection to this meaning : for (1) many of the newly con-

<sup>1</sup> Neander’s *Church History*, Bohn’s edition, vol. i. p. 451.

verted might have been foreign Jews, pilgrims to the feast, who would soon return to their native countries; and (2) the words do not necessarily imply that they all met at the same time and in the same place: on the contrary, it would seem that there were several places of meeting in the city (ver. 46); though perhaps there was one special place—the well-known upper room, to which the disciples resorted after the ascension, and where they were assembled when the Holy Ghost was given (ch. i. 15, ii. 1).

Vers. 44, 45. In these verses the community of goods is mentioned. We, however, defer the consideration of its nature until in the course of our exposition we come to ch. iv. 34-37, where it is more particularly described. Here it is stated that the disciples had all things common, that is, that they had a common store or fund; and that they sold their possessions (κτῆματα, landed property) and goods (ὑπάρξεις, moveables), and delivered the proceeds to all, as every one had need. Such Christian liberality as was here displayed would be peculiarly seasonable, as probably several of the foreign Jews would wish to remain for some time longer in Jerusalem, in order to receive further instruction; and as perhaps some of the converts might have alienated the affections of those upon whom they were dependent for support. Whatever might have been the extent of this community of goods, it was a remarkable consequence of the beneficial influence of the effusion of the Spirit upon the minds of men.

Ver. 46. Καθ' ἡμέραν τε . . . ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ—and they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple. The Christians did not forsake the services of the temple. As Luke in his Gospel tells us that after the ascension of Christ "they were continually in the temple praising and blessing God" (Luke xxiv. 53), so in his apostolic history he asserts the same fact. In this they followed the example of their Master. The time had not yet arrived when they should entirely separate themselves from the old worship of the sanctuary. Although Christians, they were still Jews: they performed the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish religion, and were

regular in their attendance in the temple at the stated hours of public prayer.

*Κατ' οἶκον*—*from house to house*. Along with this worship of God in the temple, they had also a peculiar worship among themselves. *Κατ' οἶκον* is here contrasted with *ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ*: it may either signify *in the house* (De Wette, Meyer, Wordsworth), or *from house to house* (Robinson). (Compare Luke viii. 1; Acts xv. 21; Tit. i. 5.) As the number of the disciples had greatly increased, they could not all meet in the same house; and therefore it is probable that they had meetings in several houses. Besides, each family would give entertainments (*ἀγάπαι*) to their brethren, and especially to those who were sojourners at Jerusalem.

*Μετελάβανον τροφῆς*—*did eat their food with gladness and singleness of heart*. Thus they were so actuated by the new life which the Holy Spirit infused within them, that their most ordinary actions were converted into religious exercises: their meals became feasts of love; gladness of spirit and simplicity of disposition, the moral virtues of God's children, imparted a relish even to their daily bread.

Ver. 47. *Αἰνοῦντες τὸν Θεὸν*—*praising God*: descriptive not only of the manner in which they partook their food, but of their whole religious spirit, which expressed itself in hymns of praise and thanksgiving. *Ἐχοντες χάριν*—*having favour with all the people*. Thus God, in His providence, for a time protected His infant church: He secured for it the popular favour; the storms of persecution had not yet commenced.

*Σωζομένους* — *the saved*. Undoubtedly not, as in the authorized version, *such as should be saved*: for this would require the verb to be in the future—*σωθησομένους*. And yet it is remarkable that this false translation should have been adopted by all the early English versions, except that of Wickliff. This could not have arisen from any doctrinal interest in support of Calvinism, as even the Roman Catholic version has the same translation. The word is a present or imperfect participle, and must be rendered *the saved*, or *those who were being saved*. So it is correctly translated in Luther's

version. Christians are elsewhere so styled : “The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness ; but unto us which are saved (τοῖς σωζομένοις) it is the power of God” (1 Cor. i. 8). Salvation is not something entirely future, but something present ; a blessing which has commenced ; a process which is going on in the souls of believers.

*Τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ—to the church.* This important word here occurs for the first time in Luke’s apostolic history. (See critical note.) Its literal meaning is an assembly, without any relation to the purpose of meeting (Acts xix. 32). The word, however, soon became appropriated as a Christian term to denote an assembly of Christians—the Christian community. Here it evidently denotes the Christian circle, the communion of the disciples of Christ. By a natural transition, it came to denote the house in which the assembly met ; though perhaps there is no decided example of this use of the term in the New Testament. (See, however, Matt. xvi. 18, where the church is compared to a building.)



## SECTION VI.

### THE FIRST MIRACLE.—ACTS III. 1-26.

1 Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, namely the ninth hour. 2 And a certain man, who was lame from his mother's womb, was carried, whom they placed daily at the gate of the temple called Beautiful, to ask alms of them who entered into the temple ; 3 Who, seeing Peter and John about to enter into the temple, asked alms. 4 But Peter, looking intently at him, with John, said, Look on us. 5 And he gave heed to them, expecting to receive something from them. 6 But Peter said, Silver and gold I have not ; but what I have give I thee : in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, arise and walk. 7 And having taken him by the right hand, he raised him up : and immediately his feet and ankles were strengthened. 8 And he, leaping up, stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God. 10 And they knew him, that this was he who sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple : and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened to him. 11 And as he held Peter and John, all the people ran together to them to the porch called Solomon's, greatly astonished. 12 And when Peter saw it, he answered the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at him ? or why look ye so intently on us, as if by our own power or piety we had made him to walk ? 13 The God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus ; whom ye delivered up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him. 14 But ye denied the holy and just One, and desired a man, a murderer, to be granted to you ; 15 And ye killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. 16 And His name, on account of faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom ye see and know ; and the faith which is through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. 17 And now, brethren, I know that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. 18 But God thus fulfilled what He announced before by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ should suffer. 19 Repent therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord ; 20 And that He may send Christ Jesus, who was appointed for

you : 21 Whom heaven must receive until the times of the restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets from the beginning. 22 Moses said, A Prophet will the Lord your God raise up unto you from your brethren, like unto me : Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever He shall say unto you. 23 And it shall be, that every soul who will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. 24 And all the prophets from Samuel, and those who followed, as many as have spoken, also foretold these days. 25 Ye are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 26 Unto you first, God, having raised up His Servant, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

Ver. 11. The words τοῦ ἰαθέντος χωλοῦ are wanting in A, B, C, E, &. They were probably inserted instead of αὐτοῦ, as being the commencement of a church lesson. They are omitted by Tischendorf and Lachmann. Ver. 18. Bengel, Lachmann, and Tischendorf, on the authority of B, C, D, E, &, and many cursive MSS., have placed αὐτοῦ after Χριστόν, and not after προφητῶν. Ver. 20. Instead of προκεκληρυγμένον, Griesbach, Tischendorf, and Meyer read προκεχειρισμένον, after A, B, C, D, E, &. Ver. 22. The words γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς πατέρας are wanting in A, B, C, &, and are rejected by Lachmann and Tischendorf. Ver. 26. Ἰησοῦν after αὐτοῦ, found in A, and omitted by B, C, D, E, &, is considered by Tischendorf an addition not sufficiently attested.

## EXEGETICAL REMARKS.

Ver. 1. There is no indication of the time when the event recorded in this chapter took place : probably it was not long after Pentecost, as the activity of the apostles would soon display itself. The connection of the narrative with what precedes appears to be this : the historian had mentioned that many wonders and signs were done by the apostles (Acts ii. 43) ; and of these he now adduces a remarkable instance.

*Πέτρος καὶ Ἰωάννης—Peter and John.* These two apostles, so dissimilar in character—the one being impulsive, and the other calm and contemplative—are often mentioned as being together. They were sent by Christ to make preparations for the last passover; they were most probably both present in the hall of Caiaphas; they ran together to the sepulchre; they followed Christ, after His manifestation at the sea of Tiberias; now, here, they go in company to the temple; and afterwards they were sent forth by the church to confirm the converts in Samaria. “Everywhere,” says St. Chrysostom, “we find these two apostles in great harmony together.”<sup>1</sup>

*Ἀνέβαινον εἰς τὸ ἱερόν—went up into the temple.* The temple built by Solomon on Mount Moriah had been completely destroyed by the Babylonians. Probably the only remnant of it was the great embankment, by which Solomon extended the eastern part of the mount. On the return of the Jews from captivity a second temple was built, but far inferior to the first in magnificence. Herod the Great, in the eighteenth year of his reign, commenced the restoration of the temple, and so embellished and almost entirely rebuilt it, that it might well be regarded as a third temple. The Herodian temple, from the descriptions which have come down to us, was in all probability not inferior to the temple of Solomon: it was one of the grandest edifices then in the world. The restoration of what was strictly the temple only occupied a year and a half;<sup>2</sup> but eight years were spent in completing the cloisters with their gorgeous pillars and cedar roofs, and the open courts with their tessellated work. Afterwards the successors of Herod continued, with interruptions, to adorn the temple until the commencement of the Jewish war. Hence, although properly speaking only ten years were spent in the building, yet, as the improvements continued, the Jews, reckoning from the time when Herod commenced the work, said, “Forty and six years was this temple in building” (John ii. 20).

We would form an erroneous notion of the temple, if we

<sup>1</sup> Chrysostom *on the Acts*, Hom. viii.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph. *Ant.* xv. 11. 6.

conceived it similar to any of our cathedrals. Perhaps its most magnificent part was not the temple proper, but its cloisters and courts. We must conceive a series of terraces, rising one above another, on the highest of which the temple was placed. The entire space occupied was a square, a furlong on each side, so that its circumference would be about half a mile.<sup>1</sup> The outer court, commonly called the court of the Gentiles, was the most magnificent of all. It was enclosed with a lofty wall, and surrounded the temple. On each side there were porches or cloisters, with Corinthian pillars of white marble and roofs of cedar. "The pillars," observes Josephus, "were each of them of one entire stone, and that stone was white marble; and the roofs were adorned with cedar curiously engraven. The natural magnificence and excellent polish and the harmony of the joints in these cloisters afforded a prospect which was very remarkable."<sup>2</sup> On three sides there were two rows of pillars; but on the south side, called after Herod "the royal porch," there were four rows. The open court was inlaid with stones of various colours. Around this court was a stone balustrade about four and a half feet high, on which were pillars at intervals with Latin and Greek inscriptions, declaring that beyond this no Gentile was permitted to pass.

A flight of fourteen steps led from the outer to the inner court. This was a square, and was divided into several terraces, which rose above one another in a westerly direction; the temple itself being situated not in the centre of the square, but toward its western extremity. The first terrace constituted the "court of the women," so called not because it was the space allotted exclusively to the women, but because they were not permitted to advance farther. This court had also cloisters supported by very fine and large pillars: there was, however, only a single row of them, and they were inferior in size to those of the outer court. Five, or according to some fifteen, steps farther led to the "court of the Israelites." This again was separated by a

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Ant.* xv. 11. 3; Winer's *Wörterbuch*—Tempel.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph. *Bell.* v. 5. 2.



low wall from a still higher court, called the "court of the priests." This last court surrounded the temple on every side, and led to it by a flight of twelve steps.

The temple itself was comparatively of small dimensions, being about 150 feet long, and at the vestibule 150 feet broad, but only 90 feet at the back.<sup>1</sup> There is a diversity of opinion as to its height: Josephus states it at 150 feet. It was built of large blocks of white marble, and its front was covered with plates of gold. It was divided into three parts. The vestibule, which was sixty feet wider than any other part of the house, appears to have been partially open: Josephus says that "its gate was without doors, for it represented the universal visibility of heaven." The Holy Place was separated from it by a golden door, before which hung a richly embroidered curtain. Beyond this there was a second curtain or veil, screening from the view of all the "Holy of Holies," into which the high priest alone entered once a year. It appears also, that besides these three compartments, there were rooms on each side of the temple. The appearance of the building to a stranger viewing it from the Mount of Olives, is thus described in the well-known passage of Josephus: "The outward face of the temple in its front wanted nothing that was likely to surprise either men's minds or their eyes; for it was covered over with plates of gold, which at the first rising of the sun reflected back such a splendour as made those who forced themselves to look upon it to turn away their eyes, just as they would have done at the sun's rays. This temple appeared to strangers, when they were at a distance, like a mountain covered with snow; for those parts of it that were not gilt were exceeding white"<sup>2</sup> (Joseph. *Bell.* v. 5. 6).

Ἐπὶ τὴν ὥραν τῆς προσευχῆς τὴν ἐννάτην—at the hour of prayer, namely the ninth. For the hours of prayer, see note to Acts ii. 15. The ninth hour was about three in the after-

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* v. 5. 4.

<sup>2</sup> For descriptions of the temple and its courts, see Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*, Smith's *Biblical Dictionary*, Winer's *biblisches Wörterbuch*, and especially Josephus' *Ant.* xv. 11, and *Jud. Bell.* v. 5.

noon, or, more exactly, the middle space between noon and sunset.

Ver. 2. *Πρὸς τὴν θύραν . . . Ὠραίαν*—*at the gate of the temple called Beautiful*. It is a matter of dispute what particular gate is here alluded to. Our information concerning the gates of the temple, both from Josephus and the Talmud, is defective : nor is there any of the gates described which has the name of Beautiful. Josephus, however, informs us that there was one of the gates which excelled all others in magnificence and beauty. It was made of Corinthian brass, and hence called the Corinthian gate. "Nine of the gates," he observes, "were on every side covered over with gold and silver, as well as their side posts and lintels ; but there was one gate that was without the holy house, which was of Corinthian brass, and greatly excelled those which were only covered over with silver and gold. Its height was fifty cubits, and its doors were forty cubits ; and it was adorned after a most costly manner, as having much richer and thicker plates of silver and gold than upon the others" (Joseph. *Bell.* v. 5. 3). In all probability this was the gate which received the appropriate name of Beautiful. It is, however, doubtful to what gate Josephus alludes. The general opinion is that it is the inner gate, called in the Talmud "Nicanor," which led from the outer into the inner court. This is certainly the gate mentioned by Josephus, when he says : "Moreover, the eastern gate of the inner temple was of brass, and vastly heavy, and could be with difficulty shut by twenty men, but it opened of its own accord about the sixth hour of the night" (Joseph. *Bell.* vi. 5. 3). Others, again (Bengel, Olshausen, Lange), suppose that the Corinthian gate of Josephus was an outer gate to the east of the court of the Gentiles, in the neighbourhood of Solomon's porch, elsewhere called the gate Shushan. It is argued that the beggar would take his place at an outer and not at an inner gate, because all would enter by it ; and it is expressly said that Peter and John were about to enter into the temple. It is, however, probable that there would be several beggars at the different gates of the temple. Lightfoot supposes that

it was the gate Hulda, situated to the west of the court of the Gentiles. He derives Hulda from a word signifying time, and translates ὥραϊν (from ὥρα, an hour) *porta tempestiva*, the gate of time. We learn from Martial that beggars sat at the gates of heathen temples. Chrysostom recommends the practice as regards Christian churches.

Vers. 3-5. As Peter and John were about to enter the temple—either into the outer court by the gate Shushan, or more probably into the inner court by the gate Nicanor—they encountered a lame beggar sitting at the gate, who asked alms of them. Peter—compassionating his miserable condition, and doubtless moved by a divine impulse, which intimated to him that the divine energy was about to be displayed by the illustrious miracle to be wrought by his means—looked intently at him, and said, “Look on us;” thereby seeking to arouse his attention, so that the cure which he was about to confer on his body might benefit his soul. The lame man, however, did not expect anything extraordinary: all that he hoped for was something in the way of alms.

Ver. 6. Ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰ. Χ.—*in the name of Jesus Christ*. That is, in virtue of the name; as that which is the efficient cause of the miracle; as that by the power of which the lame man was to arise and walk. The difference in the manner in which Christ wrought His miracles, and the apostles performed theirs, is here observable. The apostles performed their miracles through Christ, in virtue of His name and authority. It was in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, as the Messiah, that this miracle was performed. They were the mere instruments; He was the efficient agent. Christ, on the other hand, performed His miracles in His own name and on His own authority. He wrought independently. His language was that of omnipotence; theirs was that of faith in Him. He said, “I say unto you, Arise;” they said, “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.” He was the Messiah, the Son; they were the servants of the household.

Vers. 7, 8. From these verses we learn the greatness and

the perfection of the miracle. The man had been lame from his mother's womb; his lameness was not caused by some disease which might be cured, but arose from a defect of nature; he never had walked; he had to be carried to the Beautiful gate of the temple; he was above forty years of age (ch. iv. 22). He was a well-known character; there could be no deception in his lameness. The miracle was publicly performed: it was not wrought in the closet, but at one of the chief entrances to the temple. *Αἱ βάσεις* are here *the feet*, as the instruments of walking: so Wisdom xiii. 18; Joseph. *Ant.* vii. 5. 5. The word literally signifies a *step, pace*. *Τὰ σφυρά*, *the ankles*, here added as showing wherein the lameness of the man consisted. He leaped and walked as an evidence of his joy and exuberance of spirits; certainly not, as Bloomfield strangely imagines, at first from ignorance how to walk, by which his essays would be rather leaping than walking. Thiess imagines that the beggar only pretended to be lame, and that, frightened by the severe rebuke of Peter, he rose up and walked, and that afterwards, from fear of the rage of the people, he kept close to the apostles. Such an opinion changes the entire narrative, and converts the apostles into deceivers: it is here only mentioned, to show the length to which the rationalistic school can go, and the extreme shifts to which they have recourse, in order to destroy the miraculous in the narrative, and yet to preserve its credibility.

Vers. 9, 10. Here we are informed of the effect of the miracle upon the multitude. The lame man was well known. He was laid daily at one of the most frequented gates of the temple. And now the people are filled with astonishment to see the same lame man in full possession of the use of his limbs—leaping, and walking, and praising God. The great design of the miracle seems to have been to arouse the attention of the multitude—to convert them into inquirers. As has been well said, “miracles are bells to call the people to worship.” Of course, over and above this, they are also the divine credentials of the messengers—of those who are to conduct the worship.



Ver. 11. Ἐπὶ τῇ στοᾷ τῇ καλουμένῃ Σολομῶντος — *to the porch called Solomon's*. This porch or cloister was on the eastern side of the "court of the Gentiles." It is thus described by Josephus: "These cloisters (the eastern cloisters) belonged to the outer court, and were situated in a deep valley, and had walls that reached four hundred cubits in length, and were built of square and very white stones, the length of each of which was twenty cubits, and their height six cubits. This was the work of King Solomon, who first of all built the entire temple" (Joseph. *Ant.* xx. 9. 7). It is not, however, probable that any of the porches built by Solomon survived such a lapse of time and so many disasters. Solomon, we are informed, filled up part of the adjacent valley toward the east, and built there an outward portico which was called Solomon's porch. The artificial embankment would perhaps remain; but the porch itself would be destroyed. This porch, then, was called Solomon's, not because it was the very same that was built by Solomon, but because, being erected on the same artificial terrace, and constructed on the same plan, it retained its original name. It was in this porch, or in the court in front, that the traffic of the money-changers and the sale of oxen and doves were carried on; and it was here also that our Lord was surrounded by the unbelieving Jews when they threatened to take away His life (John x. 23). And now here another crowd of Jews, actuated by better feelings, filled with astonishment at the great miracle which had been performed, surrounded the two apostles.

Ver. 12. Ἀπεκρίνατο — not addressed the people, but *answered* them; because their astonishment and exclamations of surprise expressed a wish for an explanation of the wonderful event that had happened. (Compare ch. ii. 12, "What meaneth this?") Τούτῳ—masculine, not neuter: not, as in the authorized version, *Why marvel ye at this?* but, *Why marvel ye at this man?*—corresponding to ἡμῖν in the second clause of the sentence. Their wonder was not in itself the subject of censure, but because they referred the miracle to the power or piety of the apostles. It took this

shape: What wonderful men are these who have performed so great a miracle? Ἰδίᾳ δυνάμει—*by our own power*, in virtue of our inherent power; ἢ εὐσεβείᾳ—or *piety*. Some transcribers, not seeing the connection between the performance of the miracle and piety, have written, ἐξουσίᾳ, *authority*. But the obvious meaning is: as if we were such pious people, that God should reward us with the power of working miracles. Hence Luther renders it *Verdienst*, merit, which certainly is implied in the term.

Ver. 13. Ὁ Θεὸς Ἀβραὰμ — *the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers*. The apostle most appropriately commences his discourse with the mention of God as their ancestral God. He thus shows them that it was no new religion, inconsistent with the law of Moses, that Jesus came to introduce, but that the God of their fathers was the author of them both: in short, that the gospel and the religion of Moses sprang from the same divine source. He thus at the outset removes what might have been an obstacle to their reception of the truth.

Τὸν παῖδα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν—*His servant Jesus*. This by the Vulgate and almost all ancient interpreters, and among moderns by Kuinöl and Heinrichs, has been rendered as if it were the same as *His Son Jesus*. But the word for “son” is υἱός, not παῖς. Almost all modern interpreters are now agreed that the phrase must be rendered *His servant Jesus*. So Bengel, Nitzsch, Olshausen, De Wette, Meyer, Baumgarten, Lechler, Stier, Hackett, Wordsworth, Alford. Lechler observes, that since Nitzsch has thrown light upon the subject, all modern interpreters have agreed that παῖς Θεοῦ is not the Son of God, but the servant of God. It thus designates not His nature, but His official and Messianic character—as the servant of God so often foretold in the later chapters of the prophecies of Isaiah (xl.–lxvi.). This title is directly applied to Christ in St. Matthew’s Gospel, in a citation from these prophecies, “Behold my servant (παῖς) whom I have chosen” (Matt. xii. 18); and in the Acts of the Apostles it occurs four times in reference to Christ; in our passage, in ver. 26 of this chapter, and in

ch. iv. 27, 30 : in all these places it must be translated *servant*. So also the title is once applied to Israel (Luke i. 54), and twice to David (Luke i. 69 ; Acts iv. 25). None of the apostles, however, is ever called *παῖς Θεοῦ*, but only *δοῦλος Θεοῦ*.

Ver. 14. *Τὸν ἅγιον καὶ δίκαιον*—*the Holy and Just One*. The peculiar titles of the Messiah in the Old Testament. He is there called the Righteous Branch, the Lord our Righteousness, the Holy One, God's righteous Servant. He is called the Holy One, because He was set apart by God ; and the Just One, on account of His innocence and perfect righteousness. These epithets are here used to mark the contrast between Him and Barabbas. *Ἄνδρα φονέα*—*a man, a murderer* : more emphatic than if he had merely said a murderer : a man belonging to the class of murderers.

Ver. 15. *Τὸν ἀρχηγὸν τῆς ζωῆς*—*the Author of life*. This is the only place where Christ is called the Author of life : elsewhere He is called *ἀρχηγὸς τῆς σωτηρίας* (Heb. ii. 10) and *ἀρχηγὸς τῆς πίστεως* (Heb. xii. 2). Christ is the Author of life because He preached eternal life to the world, proposed it to believers, purchased it for them by His precious blood, and shall at length bestow it upon them.

In these two last verses (vers. 14, 15) the guilt of the Jews is prominently brought forward by a series of antitheses. There is the contrast between their conduct and that of the heathen Pilate : they delivered up and denied their Messiah before Pilate ; whereas Pilate, convinced of His innocence, had decided to release Him. And there is the contrast between the character of Jesus and that of Barabbas : they denied the Holy and Just One, and desired in His place a man, a murderer. They killed the Author of life, whilst they interceded for the pardon of a murderer, the destroyer of life.

Ver. 16. *Ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει*—*on account of faith in His name*. These words have been variously rendered. Some (Olshausen, Stier, Heinrichs, Humphry) render them, *for or to faith in His name* ; and suppose that the meaning is, that Peter healed the lame man for the purpose of leading him as well

as others to faith in Christ.<sup>1</sup> But such a meaning strains the preposition, and does not well suit the context. Peter speaks of himself and the apostles as witnesses, and he brings forward an instance of the efficacy of their faith; and there is an evident parallelism between the first and second clauses of the sentence: the same faith is mentioned, but in the second clause it is evidently the faith of the apostle. We therefore prefer the interpretation, *on account of faith in His name* (Meyer, De Wette, Hackett, Alford); that is, because we have faith in His name—the faith alluded to being that of the apostles. *Ἡ πίστις ἣ δι' αὐτοῦ*—*the faith which is through Him*: not our faith in Him (Piscator); nor our faith in God, or our miraculous faith (De Wette); but rather that faith which is wrought or produced in us by Him (Alford, Meyer, Olshausen).

It is to be observed that there is no mention of the faith of the lame man. The faith in this sixteenth verse has no reference to him. He was at first without faith: instead of expecting to be cured, he hoped to receive money from the apostles. Afterwards, indeed, faith was excited within him, when he went with the apostles into the temple, praising God; but it was not demanded from him as a prerequisite to his cure. The miraculous faith, or that faith which was the instrumental cause of the miracle, was not in the man, but in Peter. Our Lord certainly frequently required faith in those whom He cured; but it does not seem to have been an indispensable condition. In the case of this lame man it seems to have been wanting; it followed, but did not precede his cure.

Ver. 17. *Κατὰ ἄγνοιαν ἐπράξατε*—*in ignorance ye did it*. The apostle, whilst he charges the Jews with being the betrayers and murderers of their Messiah, yet admits, as a mitigation of their guilt, that they had committed the crime through ignorance. They were not aware that He whom they had put to death was the Messiah. Their ignorance arose from expecting a victorious Messiah, who should free them from the galling yoke of Rome, and restore to them

<sup>1</sup> Stier's *Words of the Apostles*, pp. 48, 49.



the kingdom of David; and hence they were prejudiced against the claims of Jesus to be the Messiah. This ignorance extended also to their rulers: for the words are not to be rendered, "In ignorance ye did as your rulers did;" but that what their rulers did was also in ignorance. Of course there were different degrees of this ignorance, from the insensate blindness of the multitude to the moral blindness of the Pharisees, who shut their eyes against the truth. Yet all were ignorant; for we believe that the Jewish hierarchy, had they been fully persuaded that Jesus was the Messiah, would not have dared to put Him to death (see 1 Cor. ii. 8). This ignorance, although it excused, yet did not exonerate them: so far as it was voluntary and avoidable, it was culpable. Hence our Lord, whilst He prays for the forgiveness of His enemies on account of their ignorance, yet in doing so recognises their guilt: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Ver. 18. *Πάντων τῶν προφητῶν*—*of all the prophets*. This is not to be understood as a hyperbole (Kuinoel): for the Messiah was indeed the centre subject of Jewish prophecy; and the sufferings of the Messiah, along with His future glory, were the great subjects of Messianic prophecy (1 Pet. i. 11).

Ver. 19. *Εἰς τὸ ἐξαλειφθῆναι*, etc.—*that your sins may be blotted out*. The immediate end to be obtained by their repentance and conversion. In consequence of them, their sins would be blotted out. The idea of forgiveness is here, as in Col. ii. 14, represented as the blotting out or erasure of a handwriting. *Ὅπως ἂν*—*in order that*; not to be rendered, as in our version, *when* with the future—*postquam* (Beza, Castalio): *ὅπως ἂν* united with the subjunctive entirely precludes such a translation. The words can only admit of the meaning *in order that* (Winer, Meyer, De Wette, Wordsworth, Alford).

*Ἔλθωσι καιροὶ ἀναψύξεως*—*times of refreshing may come*. The remote end of their repentance and conversion. But what is here meant by times of refreshing? Certainly the conversion of the Israelites would be to themselves the cause

of much spiritual joy and peace of mind; and accordingly many refer these times to the present, and understand by them the spiritual refreshment which arises from believing in Christ. And so undoubtedly we would have interpreted the phrase, had it stood alone; but taken in connection with the next verse, which speaks of the coming of Christ, these times of refreshing can refer only to the second advent. Peter here conceives that the conversion of the Jews, as a nation, would be attended with some extraordinary scene of spiritual prosperity which would prepare the way for the second advent of Christ. All those interpretations which refer "the times of refreshing" to anything unconnected with the second advent are to be rejected; such as the deliverance of the Christians at the destruction of Jerusalem (Hammond, Grotius); the period of rest after death (Schulz); the refreshment to be enjoyed under the gospel (Kuinoel, Lightfoot, Stier); or the removal of punishment from the Jews on their repentance (Barkey).

Ver. 20. *Καὶ ἀποστείλῃ ὑμῖν Ἰ. Χ.*—*and that He may send to you Jesus Christ.* This is to be considered either as contemporaneous with the times of refreshing, or as immediately following them. The reference is evidently to an objective, and not a subjective advent. The text cannot allude to Christ's coming in spirit to destroy Jerusalem, especially considering that that was not a time of refreshing, but a time of judgment. It is a matter of dispute in what manner the apostles regarded the second coming of Christ. In all probability they were so engrossed with it, that they lost sight of intermediate events; it was the object of their earnest desire: the period indeed was concealed from them, but they continually looked forward to it; they expected it as that which might occur at any moment. Afterwards, as revelation disclosed itself, and the course of providence was developed, they did not expect it to occur in their days. Paul especially seems to have regarded it as an event in the remote future, and cautions his converts not to be shaken in mind, or to be troubled, as if the day of Christ was at hand (2 Thess. ii. 2). The precise period of the second advent, we are expressly

informed by our Lord, formed no part of divine revelation : it was designedly left in uncertainty by God. Προκειρισμένον properly signifies, *taken in hand, undertaken, determined, appointed* : Jesus was appointed for them to be their Messiah. He was their predestined Messiah. Literally, *and that He may send the appointed one to you, Christ Jesus.*

Ver. 21. Ὁν δεῖ οὐρανὸν μὲν δέξασθαι. These words admit of two translations : either *who must receive heaven*, or *whom heaven must receive*. The first interpretation is adopted by Olshausen, Lange, Heinrichs, Bengel, Stier, and other divines of the Lutheran Church. There are several reasons which decide against this meaning. It is doubtful if the verb δέχομαι is used in the sense of to *possess* ; only one example of such a use has been brought forward. Besides, “ *who must receive (that is, possess) heaven* ” is here without any suitable meaning ; whereas it is most appropriate to affirm that *heaven must receive Christ* until the period of His second advent. Hence the other translation is to be preferred, *whom the heaven must receive* (Meyer, De Wette, Lechler, Kuinöl, Baumgarten, Alford). Christ, the apostle observes, is at present in heaven, and will remain there until His second advent.

Ἀχρι χρόνων ἀποκαταστάσεως πάντων—*until the times of the restoration of all things*. The meaning of this clause is attended with considerable difficulty. The substantive ἀποκατάστασις does not again occur in the New Testament ; but the verb from which it is derived is of frequent occurrence. It is often used in the sense of *spiritual restoration* : “ *Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things* ” (Matt. xvii. 11) ; “ *Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?* ” (Acts i. 6.) The word signifies *restoration* from a state of decay or ruin. It cannot bear the meaning of *fulfilment* ; so that the passage does not mean that Christ will remain in heaven until the fulfilment of all those things which the prophets foretold (Theophylact, Grotius, Stier, Whitby). What is meant is the restoration of all things to their primeval condition. Not that all things, absolutely considered, will be restored to their former state, but that there will be a moral

restoration: the present disorders of this world will be removed; the good will finally triumph over the evil; holiness and happiness will prevail throughout the world. Accordingly, the idea of the apostle seems to be, that so long as the unbelief of Israel continues, Christ will remain in heaven; but that their repentance and conversion will bring about the times of refreshing, and of the restoration of all things, which will either precede or coincide with the second advent. It is further to be observed, that *ὅν* does not refer to *πάντων*, as if the meaning were the restoration of all those things which God hath spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets; but the “times of the restoration of all things” is to be regarded as a single phrase, and it is these “times of the restoration of all things” which is the subject of the predictions of the prophets. *Ἦν* stands for *οὗς*, agreeing with *χρόνους*.

Vers. 22, 23. The quotation in these verses is from Deut. xviii. 15, 18, 19. The language of the Septuagint is followed for the most part; but the citation is freely given. There is no necessity, from the context in the Old Testament, to refer the prediction to the order of prophets in general, as contrasted with false prophets (Olshausen, Neander, De Wette). The word is in the singular; and there is no reason for considering it in a collective point of view. Peter does not merely accommodate the prophecy, but gives the true sense, when he refers it to the Messiah. And it is evident from the Gospels and from this address of Peter, that the Jews so understood it: the Messiah was regarded by them as that great prophet like unto Moses who should come into this world. And to Christ alone can this prophecy apply. No other prophet resembled Moses. Christ alone was like Moses—a lawgiver, a mediator between God and the people, and the author of a new dispensation of religion.

Ver. 24. *Καὶ πάντες δὲ οἱ προφῆται*, etc. That is to say, all the prophets succeeding Moses, from Samuel downwards, have likewise foretold of those days. Samuel is here mentioned, because few or no prophets intervened between him and Moses; at least he is the next prophet whose writings have come down to us. He is called by the Jews “the



master of the prophets ;” and was the founder of the schools of the prophets—of that prophetic class of which David and Elijah were the highest types. *Τὰς ἡμέρας ταύτας*—*of those days*. There is no necessity to limit this to the times of the restoration of all things (Meyer, De Wette). It rather refers to the gospel times in general, which were indeed connected with, and preparatory to, these times of restoration (Alford). In all probability, this verse only contains an epitome of Peter’s discourse : he perhaps proved by express quotations from the prophets the assertion it contained. His address was to the Jews ; and therefore his appeal was to prophecy.

Ver. 25. *Ἔμεῖς ἐστε οἱ υἱοὶ τῶν προφητῶν*—*Ye are the sons of the prophets*. The prophets were called spiritual fathers ; and they who were taught by them were called the sons of the prophets. Besides, the Jews inherited the promises and blessings revealed by the prophets : “to them were committed the oracles of God.” *Καὶ τῆς διαθήκης*—*and of the covenant* : namely, the covenant which God made with Abraham, in choosing him and his posterity for a peculiar people, and in restricting the promised seed of the woman to his family. *Καὶ ἐν τῷ σπέρματί σου*, etc.—*and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed*. The quotation is from Gen. xxii. 18. It is, however, not exactly taken from the Septuagint : the order of the words is changed, and *αἱ πατριαὶ* is used instead of *τὰ ἔθνη*. The seed of Abraham is, according to Peter, not to be understood in a collective sense, as the Israelites, the posterity of Abraham ; but in a singular sense, as one seed, the descendant of Abraham, namely the Messiah. And so Paul says : “He said not, And to seeds, as of many ; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ” (Gal. iii. 16).

Ver. 26. *Ἐμὴν πρῶτον*—*to you first*. The gospel was first to be preached to the Jews. Our Lord commanded His apostles to begin at Jerusalem ; and accordingly, we not only find that this was historically the case ; but Paul, in his missionary journeys, first addressed himself to the Jews, before he turned to the Gentiles. Certainly the preaching

of the gospel to the Gentiles is here presupposed. Nor is this at variance with the fact that Peter required a special revelation before he ventured to preach to Cornelius and his Gentile companions ; for it does not appear that he ever entertained the notion that the Gentiles should not be brought within the church, but only that this would take place through the medium of Judaism. It was this error, this exclusiveness, that was removed by a special revelation. *Ἀναστήσας τὸν παῖδα αὐτοῦ*—*having raised up His servant*. Not having raised Him up from the dead (Luther, Beza) ; but having raised Him up in the sense of ver. 22, “ A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you :” that is, caused to appear, etc. ; *sent Him to bless you* with the salvation which He has procured, *in turning away every one of you from his iniquities*. The discourse thus comes to a definite conclusion, and does not appear to have been interrupted by the arrival of the priests and the captain of the temple.

## SECTION VII.

PETER AND JOHN BEFORE THE SANHEDRIM.—Acts iv. 1-22.

1 And as they were speaking to the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, 2 Being indignant because they taught the people, and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in prison until the morrow; for it was already evening. 4 But many of them who heard the word believed; and the number of the men was five thousand. 5 And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem, 6 And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest. 7 And having set them in the midst, they asked, By what power or by what name have ye done this? 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said to them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, 9 If we this day are examined concerning a good deed done to an infirm man, by what means he has been cured; 10 Be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, in Him does this man stand here before you whole. 11 This is the stone which was despised by you builders, which is become the head of the corner. 12 And there is salvation in no other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. 13 And seeing the boldness of Peter and John, and having ascertained that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they recognised them, that they had been with Jesus. 14 And, beholding the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to oppose. 15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the Sanhedrim, they conferred among themselves, 16 Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that a notable miracle has been done by them is manifest to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. 17 But that it may not spread further among the people, let us strictly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. 18 And when they had called them, they commanded them not to speak at all, nor to teach, in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John, answering, said to them, Whether it is right in the sight of God to hear you rather than God, judge ye. 20 For we cannot but speak

the things which we have seen and heard. 21 So, when they had further threatened them, they released them, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people; for all glorified God for that which was done. 22 For the man was above forty years old on whom this miracle of healing was wrought.

## CRITICAL NOTE.

Ver. 5. *Ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ* is found in A, B, D, E, and is preferred by Tischendorf, Lachmann, and Bornemann to *εἰς Ἱ.* of the *textus receptus*, found in  $\aleph$ , which, however, is defended by Meyer and De Wette.

## EXEGETICAL REMARKS.

Ver. 1. Whilst the apostles Peter and John were addressing the people, they were interrupted by the interference of the Jewish rulers. Three classes of adversaries are here mentioned—the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees. The priests (*οἱ ἱερεῖς*) were those who at the time officiated in the temple. The priesthood was divided by David into twenty-four courses; and each course had charge of the temple service for a week. This institution seems to have been revived after the captivity.

*Ὁ στρατηγὸς τοῦ ἱεροῦ*—*the captain of the temple*. Some (Calvin, Hammond, Pearson) suppose that this was the captain of the Roman garrison which was placed in the Castle of Antonia, to guard and control the temple. It is, however, improbable that he would concern himself in the present matter. The captain of the temple was more probably the Jewish priest in command of the Levitical guard of the temple. This officer appears from Josephus to have been a person of distinction among the Jews. The charge with which he was entrusted, that of guarding the temple, was one of great importance and influence. He is mentioned in 2 Macc. iii. 4 under the title of *προστάτης τοῦ ἱεροῦ*: he is again alluded to in the Acts (ch. v. 24), and is frequently mentioned by Josephus (*Ant.* xx. 6. 2, *Bell. Jud.* vi. 5. 3). In one of these passages, Josephus speaks of him as a person



of such consequence, as to be sent along with the high priest prisoner to Rome (*Ant.* xx. 6. 2).

*Οἱ Σαδδουκαῖοι.*—The Sadducees are one of the two great Jewish sects mentioned in Scripture as the opponents of Christ and His apostles. The origin of the name is disputed. Some suppose that they were so called as being the disciples of a certain Zadok, the scholar of a distinguished rabbi, Antigonus Socho. The doctrine of Antigonus, we are informed, was that virtue is its own reward, and is to be practised irrespectively of all rewards and punishments in a future state; which maxim Zadok and his disciples perverted into a denial of a future state. Others derive the name from a Hebrew word signifying *righteousness*, and suppose that the Sadducees so called themselves, because they prided themselves on the rectitude of their conduct. Josephus informs us that they and the Pharisees arose in the time of Jonathan Maccabæus.

With regard to the peculiar doctrines of the Sadducees, these appear to have been chiefly three. 1. They rejected the traditions of the Fathers. The written word, according to them, was the only rule of faith and doctrine; and all the supposed traditions, derived from Moses, were spurious. "The Sadducees," observes Josephus, "affirm that we are to esteem those observances to be obligatory which are in the written word, but are not to observe what are derived from the tradition of our forefathers" (*Ant.* xiii. 10. 6). It is, however, erroneous to suppose that they rejected all the Jewish Scriptures except the law of Moses. There is no mention of this in Josephus, or in other Jewish writers; and such a statement rests on the sole authority of Epiphanius. 2. The Sadducees rejected the doctrine of a future state. They not only affirmed that there was no resurrection of the body; but they went much further, and asserted that there was no hereafter—that this life was the whole of man's existence. "The Sadducees," says Josephus, "take away the belief of the immortal duration of the soul, and the punishments and rewards of Hades" (*Jud. Bell.* ii. 8. 14). Indeed, from an expression used by Luke, they appear to

have been materialists: "The Sadducees say there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit" (Acts xxiii. 8). This opinion of theirs seems to have arisen from their denial of tradition: because, as they supposed, the doctrine of a future state was not taught in the law of Moses; and although passages from the Psalms and the prophets might be adduced as directly asserting it, yet, in their opinion, these were to be interpreted in accordance with the writings of their great lawgiver. 3. The Sadducees, in opposition to the Pharisees, asserted the freedom of the will, and, as it appears, denied the doctrine of divine influences. "The Sadducees take away fate, and say there is no such thing, and that the events of human affairs are not at its disposal; but they suppose that all our actions are in our own power, so that we are ourselves the causes of what is good, and receive what is evil from our own folly" (Joseph. *Ant.* xiii. 5. 9). Thus, according to them, human virtue depended upon man's own efforts. From all this it would appear, that whilst the Sadducees escaped the hypocrisies and superstitions arising from the pharisaical doctrine of tradition, they fell into the more dangerous state of infidelity and selfish worldliness.

The followers of the Sadducean party, compared with those of their rival sect, were few in number; but this was counterbalanced by their superior influence. "Their opinions," observes Josephus, "were received by few, yet by those of the greatest dignity" (*Ant.* xviii. 1. 4). At this period, the most influential men among the Jews were probably Sadducees. It is even probable that the high priests Annas and Caiaphas belonged to this sect. Luke, when relating another hostile attack of the hierarchy on the apostles, says, "The high priest arose, and all they that were with him, which is the sect of the Sadducees" (Acts v. 17); and Josephus expressly asserts that a son of Annas, of the same name, and afterwards high priest, was a Sadducee<sup>1</sup> (*Ant.* xx. 9. 1).

It must have struck every reader of the Scriptures, that whereas in the Gospels the Pharisees are represented as the

<sup>1</sup> Winer's *biblisches Wörterbuch*, Smith's *Dictionary*, etc.

great opponents of Christ, in the Acts it is the Sadducees who are the most violent opponents of the apostles. The reason of this seems to be, that in the Gospels Jesus Christ came in direct collision with the Pharisees, by unmasking their hypocrisies, and endangering their influence among the people; whereas the apostles, in testifying to the resurrection of Christ, opposed the creed of the Sadducees. Perhaps also, in attacking the apostles, who taught the resurrection of that Jesus whom the Pharisees had persecuted and crucified, the Sadducees aimed an indirect blow at the favourite dogma of their rival sect.

These three parties—the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees—had each a separate ground for hostility. The priests would be displeased, because the apostles, who were not of the sacerdotal class, invaded their province by teaching the people. The captain of the temple might fear a disturbance from the assembled multitude; for it must be remembered that it was within the sacred precincts of the temple, in Solomon's porch, that the people were gathered together. And the motive of the hostility of the Sadducees is expressly told us: "They were indignant because the apostles taught the people, and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead."

Ver. 2. *Ἐν τῷ Ἰησοῦ*—*in Jesus*; that is, in the person of Jesus. The apostles do not seem directly to have taught the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead; but in testifying to the resurrection of Jesus, which was the great subject of their testimony, they asserted its possibility, by adducing an actual instance of one raised from the dead.

*Τὴν ἀνάστασιν τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν*—*the resurrection from the dead*. Principal Campbell, in his note on Matt. xxii. 23, asserts that *ἀνάστασις* does not in itself signify the resurrection, but merely the future life; and that it is only by the addition of other words that the resurrection of the body is implied. "The word *ἀνάστασις*," he observes, "or rather the phrase *ἀνάστασις τῶν νεκρῶν*, is indeed the common term by which the resurrection properly so termed is denominated in Scripture. Yet this is neither the only nor the primitive

import of the word *ἀνάστασις*. When applied to the dead, the word denotes properly no more than a renewal of life to them, in whatever manner it may happen." The Sadducees, he observes, denied not only the resurrection from the dead, but the future state of retribution. The same view of the subject is taken by Dr. Dwight. The word itself literally signifies a *rising up*,—a mode of expression which is closely allied to the idea of a resurrection, but seems obscurely and inaptly to apply to the immortality of the soul. Besides, it is doubtful whether the Jews in the time of our Saviour had any distinct idea of the existence of the soul apart from that of the body. And it is evident that in the passage under consideration, the words *ἡ ἀνάστασις ἐκ νεκρῶν* signify the resurrection properly so called, because the reference is distinctly to the rising of Jesus from the dead. By *ἀνάστασις*, then, we think, is meant the whole future state—the resurrection of both soul and body; so that when it is said that the Sadducees denied the *ἀνάστασις*, the meaning is that they called in question this future state.

Ver. 3. *Ἦν γὰρ ἑσπέρα ἤδη*—*for it was already evening*. It was three in the afternoon when Peter and John went up to the temple to pray; it was some time afterwards that they addressed the multitude: the address itself also would occupy some time, so that it would be evening, or six o'clock, when the priests and the Sadducees came upon them.

Ver. 4. *Ἐγενήθη ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν ἀνδρῶν*—*the number of the men was about five thousand*. Some suppose that the men, to the exclusion of the women, are here mentioned. Olshausen, contrary to all probability, thinks that at first it was only men who were added to the church. *Ἀνδρῶν* is here probably used for *ἀνθρωπῶν*, as including both men and women, in the same sense as when Luke speaks of the number of souls (ch. ii. 41). The number here given, five thousand, is the number of Christians then in Jerusalem, and is to be considered as including the three thousand who were converted on the day of Pentecost.

Ver. 5. *Αὐτῶν τοὺς ἄρχοντας καὶ πρεσβυτέρους καὶ γραμματεῖς*—*their rulers, and elders, and scribes*. *Αὐτῶν* here



refers not to the apostles, but to the Jews in general. By the rulers, elders, and scribes, are to be understood the Sanhedrim, or supreme council of the Jewish nation. By the rulers are meant the Sanhedrim in general, or its principal members, the chief priests; by the elders, perhaps the heads of the twenty-four courses of the priests, or the presidents of the synagogues; and by the scribes, those of the interpreters of the law who were members of the Sanhedrim.

*Ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ*—*in Jerusalem*. The manuscripts here differ (see critical note). Some (Meyer, Bengel, Lightfoot, De Wette) read, as in the *textus receptus*, εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ—to *Jerusalem*; and suppose that it means that those members of the Sanhedrim who resided out of the city came up from their country residences. The Syriac version omits the words entirely. Others (Alford), adopting the reading *in Jerusalem*, think that it implies that the meeting was not held in the temple, but in the city.

Ver. 6. *Ἀνναν τὸν ἀρχιερέα*—*Annas the high priest*. Annas—or, as he is called by Josephus, Ananus—appears at this time to have been the most influential man among the Jews. He was made high priest by Cyrenius, the governor of Syria, in the thirty-seventh year after the battle of Actium (Joseph. *Ant.* xviii. 2. 1), and continued so until the beginning of the reign of Tiberius, when he was deprived of the priesthood by Valerius Gratus, the procurator of Judea. But although no longer high priest, he still retained his authority: he exercised the chief influence during the long priesthood of his son-in-law Caiaphas; and no less than five of his sons—Eleazar, Jonathan, Theophilus, Matthias, and Ananus—were advanced to the office of high priest in his lifetime. He lived to an old age, and died before the Jewish war. Josephus says of him: “This elder Ananus proved a most fortunate man, for he had five sons who had all performed the office of a high priest, and he had himself enjoyed that dignity a long time formerly, which had never happened to any of our high priests” (*Ant.* xx. 9. 1). There is here a difficulty in the fact that Annas is here plainly termed the high priest; whereas Caiaphas in reality at this time occupied

that office. Various explanations have been given of this anomaly. We cannot suppose, with Meyer and De Wette, that Luke is here mistaken, because the historical fact was notorious; or with Baumgarten, that there is reason for supposing that Annas was the high priest for this year,—an opinion which contradicts history; or with Calvin, that this event occurred several years after the memorable day of Pentecost, when Jonathan the son of Annas was high priest, and that he was also called by the same name as his father; or with Lange and Wordsworth, that the Jews regarded Annas as the legitimate high priest (*de jure*), and Caiaphas only as the nominal one, which is a mere arbitrary supposition. The most probable opinion is, that Annas is here called the high priest, as by reason of his great authority and influence he in reality exercised all the powers of the high priest.<sup>1</sup> Hence in Luke's Gospel he is mentioned along with Caiaphas, and that first in order: "Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests" (Luke iii. 1); and John tells us that the Jews led Jesus to Annas first, in all probability because he was a more important person than Caiaphas. There is, in the great influence which Annas possessed, ground for the supposition that he was the Nasi or president of the Sanhedrim, an office at least equal to the high-priesthood in power and importance; for although the office of president of the Sanhedrim was in general conferred on the high priest, yet this was not always the case.<sup>2</sup>

*Kaì Kaiáφav*—and Caiaphas. Caiaphas was raised to the high-priesthood by Valerius Gratus, the governor of Judea, and continued undisturbed in this office during the whole procuratorship of Pilate, for a period of nearly twelve years, from A.D. 24 to A.D. 36. He was deposed at the commencement of the reign of Caligula by Vitellius the governor of Syria, and was succeeded by Jonathan, one of the sons of

<sup>1</sup> Another probable opinion is, that he is here called high priest because he once occupied that office. This, however, will hardly account for his being placed before Caiaphas, the actual high priest.

<sup>2</sup> This supposition is merely stated, without placing any weight upon it, as it is in itself doubtful.

Annas. He was entirely under the influence of Annas, who was connected with him as his father-in-law.

*Καὶ Ἰωάννην καὶ Ἀλέξανδρον*—and John and Alexander. We know nothing of these two influential persons. As regards the first, Lightfoot supposes him to have been the same as Johanan ben Zaccai, a distinguished Jewish rabbi, who, after the destruction of Jerusalem, obtained permission from the Romans that the Sanhedrim might be settled at Japhneh, and who is frequently mentioned in the Talmud. The Codex Bezae reads Jonathan, a reading adopted by Bornemann, which, if correct, would make him the same as Jonathan the son of Annas, who afterwards became high priest.—Alexander is by some supposed to have been the same as Alexander Lysimachus, who afterwards became the Alabarch or governor of the Jews in Alexandria, and who, according to Josephus and Eusebius, was the brother of Philo. There is, however, no evidence to support this supposition.

Ver. 7. *Ἐν ποίᾳ δυνάμει ἢ ἐν ποίῳ ὀνόματι*—by what power or by what name have ye done this? *Τοῦτο* refers not to the teaching of the apostles (Olshausen), but to the miracle they performed, for so Peter understood it. The Sanhedrim inquire by what power they had done this miracle: not by what authority—*potestate* (Beza); but by what physical power—*vi* (De Wette). They also inquire, By what name? In doing so, they wished to found a charge of heresy against the apostles, if they replied that the miracle was performed in the name of Jesus, whom the council had condemned as a false Messiah.

Vers. 8–10. These verses contain the answer of Peter. He commences by acknowledging their authority as rulers of the people and elders of Israel. He then answers the question, that in the name of Jesus the Nazarene, in virtue of His name as the efficient cause of the miracle, whom they had crucified, but whom God had raised from the dead, even by Him was this lame man cured. The lame man himself was present; and by pointing to him, the apostle so enforced his reply that it could not be contradicted. It is here to be observed that Peter does not say that the miracle was per-

formed in the name of God, in whose name, according to the Jews, the prophet was required to perform his miracles ; but in the name of Jesus the Nazarene, thus indirectly ascribing divine honour to Him.

Ver. 11. The allusion in this verse is to Ps. cxviii. 22. Our Lord quotes the words as referring to Himself : “ Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner ? ” (Matt. xxi. 42.) In the primary meaning of these words, David refers to himself. He complains that he was rejected by the rulers and chiefs of Israel, but that notwithstanding he was chosen by God to be the head of the Jewish nation ; like a stone cast aside by the builders as useless, but which afterwards became the principal stone of the building. It is also probable that the words became a proverb, and admitted of a variety of applications. What man despised and rejected, that God honoured and exalted. Here Peter applies the words to Christ, to whom in their highest sense they certainly refer. The Jewish rulers were the builders of the theocracy ; to them was entrusted the charge of the house of God : they had rejected Jesus, their true Messiah ; they had cast Him aside, and esteemed Him as nothing : but God, by raising Him from the dead, had constituted Him the head of the corner—that on which the whole theocracy rests—the only sure foundation of God’s spiritual temple.

Ver. 12. *Καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν . . . ἡ σωτηρία*—*and there is salvation in no other*. Some understand *ἡ σωτηρία* of the cure of the lame man, and render it, *there is healing in no other* (Michaelis, Whitby) ; but such a meaning weakens the words, and is contradicted by the statement which follows. Peter had already passed from the cure of the lame man to the character of Jesus as the promised Messiah. Others understand the word in a double sense, as comprehending both corporeal and spiritual salvation (Heinrichs, Stier). The reference is evidently to that salvation which the Messiah was to work out—a salvation from sin and its consequences. As Messiah, Jesus was constituted the only Saviour (Acts vi. 31). So Calvin, De Wette, Olshausen, Meyer.



Ver. 13. *Παρρησίαν* — *boldness*. This word, which is frequently used in the Acts of the Apostles, literally signifies *freedom of speech*. It is derived from *πᾶν ῥῆσις*, *free-spokenness*, if we may use such a word. Hence *boldness*, *freedom of utterance*. And certainly, in accusing the chief priests and rulers to their face with being the murderers of their Messiah, the apostle showed great boldness of speech.

*Ἄνθρωποι ἀγράμματοι καὶ ἰδιῶται*—*unlearned and ignorant men*. *Ἀγράμματοι* signifies *without letters*, hence *uneducated*. Here it denotes that the apostles were destitute of rabbinical learning: they had not been trained in the Jewish schools. *Ἰδιῶται* has been variously rendered. Its precise meaning depends on the context. Hence it sometimes signifies a private man, a plebeian, one unlearned, a common soldier, one not trained in gymnastic exercises (Meyer). The usual meaning given to it in this passage by commentators is *plebeian*, denoting that the apostles did not belong to the rulers, but were of the common people—that they were men of no mark. Hence Lightfoot renders it *vulgar*. As, however, the contrast here is between the speech of the apostles and their want of learning, it is perhaps best to retain the translation in the authorized version—*ignorant*. The Sanhedrim were astonished that a man so destitute of learning as Peter should so powerfully address them. So, in like manner, the discourses of Jesus gave rise to a similar astonishment: “How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?” (John vii. 15.)

*Ἐπεγίνωσκον τε αὐτοὺς ὅτι σὺν τῷ Ἰησοῦ ἦσαν*—*and they recognised them, that they had been with Jesus*. At first, it appears that the acquaintance of the apostles with Jesus did not strike them. But, as Meyer observes, their wonder sharpened their intellects; so that, on observing their prisoners more closely, they recognised them as persons whom they had seen with Jesus. Although the ministry of our Lord was chiefly confined to Galilee, yet He frequently appeared in Jerusalem with His disciples. And on several occasions some of the rulers were present at His discourses, and thus would become acquainted with the personal appearance of

at least His two most distinguished followers. Besides, we are informed that one of Christ's disciples, probably John, was personally known to Caiaphas, the high priest (John xviii. 15).

Ver. 14. The man himself, who had been miraculously restored to the use of his limbs, was present in the court. He was there standing, no longer the cripple who never had walked, and who had to be carried to the Beautiful gate of the temple. The miracle, then, could not be gainsayed; Peter's declaration could not be called in question. Baur objects that it is extremely improbable that the Sanhedrim would permit the man to be present to their own confusion, and that this notice of his presence renders the whole narrative suspicious.<sup>1</sup> But the lame man might have been called for examination, as the Jews formerly examined the man who had been born blind, whom our Lord had restored to sight; or, as the Sanhedrim was an open court, he might have come as an interested spectator; or, as Neander conjectures, he might also have been arrested at the same time with the apostles.

Vers. 15, 16. It is to be observed that, in the consultation of the Sanhedrim, they do not attempt to deny the miracle; on the contrary, they admit that this is a fact which cannot be denied. Modern sceptics would deny the possibility of the miracle entirely; but Jewish sceptics admitted the reality of the miracle, but evaded the inferences derived from it, by referring it to some other power than God. Hence they formerly accused Christ of performing miracles by the power of Beelzebub.

Vers. 17, 18. Ἀλλ' ἵνα μὴ ἐπὶ . . . εἰς τὸν λαόν—but that it spread no further among the people. The Sanhedrim find that they cannot deny the miracle, and that they cannot punish the apostles for having done a good deed to an infirm man: and besides, the multitude were at this time on the side of the apostles; and as the rulers would not yield, the only course left was by means of threats to endeavour to shut the mouths of the apostles. Since they cannot

<sup>1</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, p. 22.

answer the apostles by reason, they seek to silence them by violence. They therefore command them not to speak at all, nor teach, in the name of Jesus.

Vers. 19, 20. To this prohibition Peter replies, that they must obey God rather than man. The meaning is not, as in the authorized version, that they should hearken to God more than they hearken to man; but that in this matter they should hearken to God, and not to man at all. Two commands here came into collision: the command of the rulers not to teach in the name of Jesus, and the command of God to teach; and the weaker authority must yield to the stronger—God must be obeyed, and not man. Peter appeals to the consciences of his judges: “Whether it is right in the sight of God (*judice Deo*) to hearken to you rather than to God, judge ye.” There is a passage in the life of Socrates which bears a striking resemblance to this. When they were condemning him to death for teaching the people their duties to God, he replied: “O ye Athenians, I will obey God rather than you (*πείσομαι δὲ τῷ Θεῷ μᾶλλον ἢ ὑμῖν*); and if you would dismiss me and spare my life, on condition that I should cease to teach my fellow-citizens, I would rather die a thousand times than accept the proposal.”

Ver. 21. *Μηδὲν εὕρισκοντες*, etc.—*finding nothing how they might punish them*. This does not mean that they could not discover any pretext to punish them—any ground of accusation (*Kuinœl*); but that they could not find any particular punishment to inflict, without arousing the indignation of the people (*Meyer*). *Διὰ τὸν λαόν*—*because of the people*. The people for the present favoured the disciples: they were their defence against the hostility of the rulers. It is, however, probable, as Neander and Lange remark, that another reason of the present leniency of the Sanhedrim was, that several of its members favoured the Christians. The apostles had friends in the Sanhedrim. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus were perhaps among its members; and we afterwards read that Gamaliel, the leader of the Pharisaic party, was inclined to befriend them. Perhaps also the rivalry between the Sadducees and the Pharisees may on this occa-

sion have benefited the apostles. The Sadducees were the chief promoters of this prosecution, because the apostles preached in Jesus the resurrection; but as this was a favourite dogma of the Pharisaic faction, naturally they would not unite with the Sadducees. Afterwards indeed, when, as it appeared to them, the Mosaic religion itself was endangered by the preaching of Stephen, both sects laid aside their mutual enmity, and the Pharisees as well as the Sadducees united in their efforts to crush Christianity. At present, however, it was chiefly with the doctrines of the Sadducees that the teaching of the apostles came into collision.

It is to be observed that this trial of Peter and John before the Sanhedrim formed a crisis in the history of Christianity. The Jewish rulers were called, for the first time, to give their decision. It is true that the same council had rejected Jesus; but circumstances were altered. They had rejected their Messiah through ignorance; but now there were strong proofs that He was raised from the dead, and thus declared by God to be the Messiah. The Holy Spirit had been poured forth. Thousands of Jews had become converts to Christianity. What, then, are the council to do? Are they to yield to these evidences, and acknowledge the crucified One as their Messiah? Or are they to persevere in unbelief? And it is to be observed that the Sanhedrim was not only the highest civil authority in the nation, but the highest religious authority. The Jews were still a theocracy, and their scribes and elders sat in Moses' seat. How important, then, the crisis! What consequences depended on this present decision! They consult and deliberate, and decide against Christianity. "What a shock to the mind," as Baumgarten observes; "what perplexity, weakness, and want of faith would in these days show themselves, if the highest authority in sacred things were to decide against the truth! How many are there at all times who are disposed to maintain inviolate a respect for such an authority, which they say is indispensable for the general good, even though truth would in some degree suffer thereby!



How few in such a case would maintain either internal certainty, or even external firmness! And what is any sacred authority among ourselves, compared with the Sanhedrim of Israel in the first days after Pentecost!"<sup>1</sup>

The rulers of Israel, however ignorant when they rejected and crucified Jesus, must now have strongly suspected that He whom they had crucified was indeed the Messiah. But if they acknowledged this, then they must confess that they were guilty of a crime of the greatest magnitude. This they could not prevail upon themselves to do. They therefore stifle their convictions; and, as is generally the case with those who do so, they come forth as persecutors of that cause which they more than half suspect is true; they attempt to drown by violence the accusations of their conscience. They had only one choice: they must either acknowledge that they had crucified their Messiah, or else persecute the Christians as the disciples of a pretended Messiah; and they choose the latter alternative.

---

#### ON THE SANHEDRIM.

Our information concerning the Sanhedrim is but scanty. The Jewish rabbis trace its origin back to the time of Moses, and suppose it to have been the same as the council of seventy elders appointed in the wilderness to assist Moses in his judgments (Num. xi. 16). They maintain that this council was continued until the captivity, and was re-organized by Ezra on the return of the Jews. This opinion has been supported by Grotius, Salmasius, and Selden. It would, however, appear that this council of seventy elders was only provisional, and that it ceased on the establishment of the Israelites in Canaan, as there is no mention of it in the subsequent history of the nation. Besides, the word Sanhedrim is Greek (*συνέδριον*), and therefore its origin is to be dated after the Jews came in contact with the Greeks.

<sup>1</sup> Baumgarten's *Apostolic History*, vol. i. p. 96.

The first mention of it by Josephus is in the time of the high-priesthood of Hyrcanus, when Herod (afterwards the Great) was summoned before it (*Ant.* xiv. 9. 4). In all probability, it is the same with the Council of the Jews (*γερονσία τῶν Ἰουδαίων*) mentioned in the second book of Maccabees (2 Macc. i. 10, iv. 44).

It is generally agreed that the Sanhedrim was composed of seventy-one persons; there being seventy members and a president. These members seem to have included the high priest for the time being, the former high priests, the heads of the twenty-four priestly courses, and others from among the elders or rulers of the synagogues, and from among the scribes or the interpreters of the law. The president of this council was called the Nasi, and was at this period one of the most influential men among the Jews. In general, the high priest was also the president of the Sanhedrim, although this was not necessarily the case. There was also a vice-president, who sat at his right hand, called in the Talmud "the father of the house of judgment."

The place where the Sanhedrim at first met was a room in the temple, situated between the court of the Israelites and the court of the priests, called the Hall of Gazzith. Forty years, however, before the destruction of Jerusalem, we are informed that, for some unknown reason, their place of meeting was removed to a building without the courts of the temple, but still adjoining to them, situated on Mount Moriah. After the destruction of Jerusalem, the Sanhedrim, by the permission of the Romans, removed to Japhneh, and after several other changes was settled at Tiberias.

The Sanhedrim was the highest national court among the Jews. Its jurisdiction extended to all manner of questions, both civil and religious. Political offenders as well as religious heretics were summoned before it. The accused were heard in defence, witnesses were examined, and sentences from which there was no appeal were pronounced. We find that Jesus was tried before this court as a false Messiah; Peter and John as workers of miracles, who appropriated divine powers to themselves; Stephen as a blasphemer; and Paul

as a teacher of false doctrines. In one important matter, however, the authority of the Sanhedrim was abridged: the Romans deprived it of the power of life and death. They might pronounce sentence of death, but the sanction of the Roman governor had to be obtained before that sentence could be carried into execution. According to the Talmud, the Sanhedrim was deprived of the power of inflicting capital punishment forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem; whereas formerly it alone of all the Jewish courts possessed this power (Joseph. *Ant.* xiv. 9. 3). Hence the remark of the Jewish rulers to Pilate: "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death" (John xviii. 31). The stoning of Stephen is not an exception to this; for that happened during a popular tumult, and when, in all probability, there was a vacancy in the Roman procuratorship, after Pilate had been sent to Rome. A similar instance occurred afterwards, when James the Just was put to death by the high priest Ananus during the absence of the Roman governor: for Josephus expressly informs us that this was an illegal assumption of power, and for which Ananus was deposed from the high-priesthood (*Ant.* xx. 9. 1). Nor was the Sanhedrim merely a criminal court, but also a court of legislature. They made laws for the regulation of worship, and they fixed the days of the new moons. Under the Roman government, however, its legislation would necessarily be almost entirely confined to religious matters. It would seem also that its jurisdiction was not confined to Judea, but extended to the Jews resident abroad; for when Paul went to persecute the Christians at Damascus, he carried with him letters from the Sanhedrim to the synagogues of that city (Acts ix. 2).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Winer's *biblischer Wörterbuch*, article Synedrium; Smith's *Biblical Dictionary*; Olshausen's *Gospel and Acts*, vol. iv. p. 72.

## SECTION VIII.

### PRAYER OF THE CHURCH, AND COMMUNITY OF GOODS.—

ACTS IV. 23–37.

23 And, being released, they went to their own, and related what things the chief priests and elders said to them. 24 And they having heard it, lifted up their voice with one accord to God, and said, “Lord, Thou who hast made the heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and all things in them; 25 Who by the mouth of Thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the peoples imagine vain things? 26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. 27 For of a truth, in this city, against Thy holy servant Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, were gathered together, 28 To do what things Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done. 29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and give to Thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak Thy word, 30 Whilst Thou stretchest forth Thine hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Thy holy servant Jesus.” 31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

32 And the multitude of believers were of one heart and of one soul: and not one said that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. 33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great favour was upon them all. 34 Neither was there any among them that needed: for such as were possessors of fields or houses sold them, and brought the prices of what was sold, 35 And placed them at the feet of the apostles; and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. 36 And Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, which is, by interpretation, The son of exhortation, a Levite, a Cyprian by birth, 37 Having a field, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the feet of the apostles.

### CRITICAL NOTES.

Ver. 24. *Ὁ Θεός* is wanting in A, B, *8*, several versions and Fathers, and contained in D, E; it is omitted by Lach-



mann and Tischendorf, but retained by Meyer, De Wette, and Alford. Ver. 25. The readings in this verse are various; among which ὁ τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου στόματος Δαυεὶδ παιδὸς σου εἰπὼν is the best attested: it is contained in A, B, E,  $\aleph$ ; it is, however, rejected by Tischendorf and Meyer, who retain the reading of the *textus receptus*. Ver. 27. Ἐν τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ is contained in A', B, D, E,  $\aleph$ , and is inserted by all modern critics as undoubtedly genuine. Ver. 36. Instead of Ἰωσήs, A, B, D, E,  $\aleph$  read Ἰωσήφ, the reading now generally adopted.

#### EXEGETICAL REMARKS.

Ver. 23. Πρὸς τοὺς ἰδίους—to their own. Olshausen supposes that by ἱδιοι is here meant the household church of the apostles, those with whom they were accustomed to unite in social prayer; but there is nothing in the context to limit the expression to so narrow a circle. Meyer and De Wette suppose that the fellow-apostles are meant, because it is said of all present that they spake the word of God (ver. 31), and because in ver. 32 the multitude of believers are distinguished from them; but speaking the word of God was not a matter confined to the apostles, and ver. 32 is the commencement of a new paragraph. By ἱδιοι, then, is most naturally meant the community of believers, the church in general. So Kuinœl, Baumgarten, Lechler. Among believers the apostles felt themselves at home, as contrasted with being among the rulers in the Sanhedrim. To them they relate all that the chief priests and rulers—that is, the Sanhedrim—had said to them. “Not for their own glory,” says St. Chrysostom, “did they tell the tale; but what they displayed were the proofs therein exhibited of the grace of Christ. All that their adversaries had said, this they told: their own part, it is likely, they omitted.”

This was a most important crisis for the infant church. The highest civil and religious authority in the nation had decided against it. But, weak and defenceless in itself, it does not despond: on the contrary, it betakes itself to God

in prayer; and filled with a holy boldness, it defies all the powers of the world combined to overthrow the cause of Christ. "The church," observes Baumgarten, "is no doubt shaken; but it is the shaking of a tree by the wind, which only causes it to strike a deeper and firmer root into the ground."<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 24. Οἱ δὲ ἀκούσαντες ὁμοθυμαδὸν, etc.—*But when they heard that, they lifted up their voice with one accord to God.* To the threats of their enemies, the church opposes prayer to God. The origin of this prayer has been variously understood. Bengel supposes that Peter was the spokesman, and that the other disciples repeated the words after him; but, according to the context, it was Peter and John who gave the account, and those who heard that prayed. In a similar manner, Baumgarten supposes that the whole assembly sang together the second Psalm, and that Peter made an application of it to their present circumstances; but the words of the psalm are so interwoven with the application as to form one prayer. Meyer thinks that the words uttered were a form of prayer of the apostolic church of Jerusalem, composed under their fresh impressions of the sufferings of Christ, and under the impulse of the Holy Ghost, and which was now used on account of its suitableness to the occasion;<sup>2</sup> but the impression conveyed in the narrative is, that the prayer was now for the first time composed, since it expressly refers to the threatenings of the Sanhedrim, of which they had just been informed. The most probable opinion is that adopted by De Wette, Olshausen, Stier, Lechler, and Alford, that one of the apostles or of the disciples uttered the prayer, and the rest either followed it by word of mouth, or inwardly assented to it.

Δέσποτα, σὺ ὁ ποιήσας τὸν οὐρανὸν—*Lord, Thou who hast made the heaven.* Some supply εἶ after σὺ—*Lord, Thou art He who hast made*; but the addition is unnecessary. God is here spoken of as the Creator of all things, because the disciples had recourse to His Omnipotence as a defence

<sup>1</sup> Baumgarten's *Apostolic History*, vol. i. p. 100, Clark's translation.

<sup>2</sup> See also Wheatly on the *Prayer Book*.

against their enemies. All the power of their adversaries is but feebleness, compared with the power of Him who is the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and all things in them.

Vers. 25, 26. This quotation is from Ps. ii. 1, 2. The words are taken verbatim from the Septuagint. The second Psalm is in this passage ascribed to David. There is no superscription either in the Hebrew or in the Septuagint; but the Jews ascribed all those psalms whose authors are not mentioned to David; and there are strong presumptive evidences that this second Psalm in particular was his composition.<sup>1</sup> *Ἐφρύαξαν* properly refers to the rage of an unmanageable horse; hence to rage, to make a noise, to raise a tumult. *Κατὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ*—*against His Anointed*. This reference is to the Jewish custom of anointing kings, prophets, and priests, when they were consecrated to their respective offices. “Christ” from the Greek, and “Messiah” from the Hebrew, both suggest the same idea—the Anointed.

With regard to the meaning of these words, they may have a historical foundation, and a primary application to David. He was God’s anointed king. Against him the kings of the earth and the rulers were combined. He was exposed to the attacks of foreign enemies: the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, Idumeans, and Syrians were confederate against him. He was a prey to civil dissensions, and once he had to fly before his rebellious son. But David here strengthens himself in God; and strong in His protection, he derides all the efforts of his enemies. He was the anointed king of Zion, and therefore all the attacks of his enemies were directed against the Lord Himself.

But whatever may have been its primary meaning, the Psalm is evidently Messianic. It is frequently applied by the inspired writers to Christ, as is here done by the church in general. Thus Paul, in speaking of the resurrection of Christ, expressly quotes it: “As it is written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee”

<sup>1</sup> Its applicability to the circumstances of the life of David is very evident. See below.

(Acts xiii. 33).<sup>1</sup> Its Messianic character is also admitted by Rabbi David Kimchi, Saadiah Gaon, and other Jewish writers. And those German critics, such as De Wette, who appear the most unwilling to admit the Messianic nature of the Psalms, yet allow that this psalm refers to the Messiah.<sup>2</sup>

Ver. 27. In this verse, the church in its prayer makes an application of the prophetic words of David to their present circumstances. *Ἐν τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ*—*in this city*. These words, although not in the *textus receptus*, are regarded as genuine by all modern critics: they answer to “Upon my holy hill of Zion” in the second Psalm (Ps. ii. 6). *Ἐπὶ τὸν ἅγιον παῖδα σου Ἰησοῦν*—*against Thy holy servant Jesus*. *Παῖδα*, the same word which is applied to David in ver. 25: it signifies, not son, but servant. See note to ch. iii. 26. *Λαοῖς Ἰσραὴλ*—*the peoples of Israel*, in the plural: used probably to correspond with *λαοῖς* in the prophecy, and without reference to the ten tribes, or to the Jews dispersed among the nations. There is a designed correspondence between the different enemies who rose against God’s holy servant Jesus, and those mentioned in the Psalm as gathered together against the Lord and His Anointed. Thus the heathen correspond to the Gentiles, that is, the Romans; the peoples to the people of Israel; the kings of the earth to Herod; and their rulers to Pontius Pilate. And so also the Lord in the Psalm corresponds to God, the Maker of heaven and of earth; and the Lord’s Anointed to “Thy holy servant Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed.”

Ver. 28. *Ποιῆσαι ὅσα ἡ χεὶρ σου*, etc.—*to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done*. These words are not to be connected with *ἔχρισας*—that God had anointed Jesus to do whatsoever He had previously determined (Limborch),—a meaning which does violence to the text. But they belong to *συνήχθησαν*—that Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatsoever God’s hand and

<sup>1</sup> For the application of this psalm to Christ, see Heb. i. 5, v. 15, Rev. ii. 26, 27, xii. 5, xix. 15.

<sup>2</sup> De Wette, *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 53.



counsel determined before to be done. They thought to do their own will, but in reality they were fulfilling the purpose of God. He makes the actions of His enemies subservient to His purposes. "The death of the Lord," as Meyer observes, "was not the accidental work of hostile wilfulness; but, on the contrary, the necessary result of the divine determination, which must use the free action of man as its instruments."<sup>1</sup> This determination of God, however, must be explained in such a manner as to make it consistent with the free agency of men. Herod, and Pontius Pilate, and the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, though acting as the instruments of God's will, were not freed from moral responsibility, nor was their guilt thereby in the least degree extenuated. *Χεῖρ* refers to the power, and *βουλή* to the wisdom of God.

Vers. 29, 30. These verses contain the petition of the church. The church entreats the Lord to behold the threatenings of its enemies; that is, to behold them according to His watchful providence, His restraining power, and His protecting care. It is, however, to be observed that the disciples do not imprecate the vengeance of God upon their enemies: what they pray for is not acts of wrath, but deeds of mercy. For themselves, the disciples pray for boldness of utterance—"that with all boldness they may speak the word;" that they might not be intimidated by the declared opposition of their rulers, seeing that no combination of power can prevail against the Lord and His Anointed. And they further pray for success in their ministry: that God would stretch forth His hand, not to smite His and their enemies, but to heal; and that signs and wonders (miracles of healing) might be done through the name of His holy servant Jesus.

Ver. 31. *Ἐσαλεύθη ὁ τόπος*—*the place was shaken*. This was evidently a miraculous shaking, as the direct act of God; and is not to be explained as a natural event—the accidental occurrence of an earthquake (Kuinoel, Heinrichs). It is here mentioned as the divine answer to the prayer of the

<sup>1</sup> Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 107.

church; a sign that God had heard their requests, similar to the other external and miraculous signs which occurred on the day of Pentecost. Both the heathen and the Jews thought the earthquake an intimation of the divine presence. For the heathen ideas on the subject, see Virgil, *Æn.* iii. 89, and Ovid, *Met.* xv. 672. There are also similar references in the rabbinical writings, and in the Old Testament. See Ps. xxix. 8, lxxviii. 8; Isa. xxix. 6; Ezek. xxxviii. 19; Joel iii. 16; Hab. iii. 6, etc. Baumgarten supposes that the shaking of the place where they were assembled was a sign that the will of God had power over the foundations of the earth; that not only all the might of the world, but the world itself, depended for its continuance on the divine will. Bengel thinks that it was the symbol that all things were about to be shaken by the Gospel. Perhaps, however, it is to be regarded merely as an answer to prayer: that the disciples were not to be alarmed, seeing that God was on their side. The declared favour of God is here opposed to the declared hostility of their enemies. And accordingly it follows that "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and spoke the word of God with boldness."

Ver. 32. *Τοῦ δὲ πλῆθους τῶν πιστευσάντων*, etc.—*And the multitude of believers were of one heart and of one soul.* This is to be considered as the commencement of a new paragraph, descriptive of the state of the church. Four particulars are mentioned: unity of spirit, apostolic testimony to the resurrection of Christ, great favour upon all the disciples, and the community of goods. The first particular is unity of spirit: the disciples were of one heart and of one soul,—a proverbial expression for the most endearing friendship. As in Plutarch, *δύο φίλοι, ψυχὴ μία*. There was among them no difference of sentiment. This was the more remarkable when we consider the number of the disciples, now amounting to five thousand. This concord arose from their being comparatively free of all selfish aims: they sought not their own interests, but the interests of each other. "Not one said that ought of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common."

Ver. 33. *Καὶ μεγάλη δυνάμει*, etc.—*And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.* This is the second particular. It was the peculiar province of the apostles to bear witness of the resurrection of Christ (Acts i. 22, ii. 32, etc.). This witness they gave with great power, either with powerful and effective eloquence (*παρρησία*, boldness of speech), or by the performance of miracles of power.

*Χάρις τε μεγάλη ἦν ἐπὶ πάντας αὐτούς*—*and great favour was upon them all.* This is the third particular. These words admit of two different meanings, according as we refer *χάρις* to men or to God. Some (Calvin, Grotius, Kuinöl, Olshausen, Humphry) understand by it, favour among the people. They think that the love of believers displayed toward each other called forth the admiration of the Jewish people, and rendered them favourably disposed (*Vide, ut sese invicem diligant*—Tertullian). This corresponds with what Luke had already said, that the disciples had favour with all the people (Acts ii. 47). “This served,” observes Calvin, “not a little to the diffusion of their doctrine, that by assisting the poor they found favour at the hands of strangers. They were beloved, because they were bountiful. No doubt, also, their honesty, and temperance, and modesty, and patience, and other virtues, did provoke many to bear them good-will.” Others (Beza, Meyer, De Wette, Baumgarten, Lechler, Alford, Wordsworth, Hackett) understand by it divine favour, the grace of God. According to this opinion, *χάρις* was not the result of their liberality among themselves, but its cause. It is difficult to determine which is the more correct meaning, inasmuch as each meaning gives a good sense, and suits the context. If a preference is to be given, we would say that, upon the whole, the second meaning is in more logical connection with what follows—*οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐνδεής τις ὑπῆρχεν*. The word can hardly have, as Bengel supposes, two different meanings, and signify both favour with the people and the grace of God.

Vers. 34, 35. The fourth particular mentioned in these verses is the community of goods. This will require more

consideration. It was formerly mentioned by Luke in ch. ii. 44, 45. The expressions are too strong to permit us to suppose, that all that is meant is merely that the disciples were extremely generous and liberal—that they gave freely of their substance (De Wette). There was obviously, in some sense, an actual community of goods; and it will not do to say, with De Wette, that Luke here exaggerates. And yet we must not go to the other extreme, and suppose that all property ceased among the Christians; that they sold all their possessions and goods, and placed them in a common fund, out of which all were supported. The words certainly at first sight would seem to imply as much; but there are several considerations which render such a meaning improbable.

It would appear that this community of goods, whatever is meant by it, was entirely confined to Jerusalem. There is no trace of it in any of the epistles, or in the Acts of the Apostles, except as regards the church in Jerusalem. On the contrary, the whole charge which is given in Scripture for almsgiving, all the rules which are laid down to the rich, the different degrees of rank recognised in Scripture, the warnings against covetousness, and the exhortations to benevolence, clearly demonstrate that nothing resembling a community of goods existed in the Christian church at large. Indeed, it does not seem to have continued long in Jerusalem. It was instituted to meet existing emergencies, when the church was poor, weak, and feeble; and when the circumstances of the case were altered, it was abandoned. Meyer, with whom Alford agrees, thinks that this may explain the great poverty of the church of Jerusalem—that by this method their possessions were naturally soon exhausted. He also thinks that their expectation of the near approach of the second advent made them put the less value on their earthly possessions, and might have contributed to this community of goods.

Another thing to be remarked is, that this community of goods was perfectly voluntary on the part of the disciples. There was no law in the church, no apostolic injunction



which bound believers to sell their lands, and to place their money in a common fund. This is evident from what Peter said to Ananias: "Whilst thy possession remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" (Acts v. 4); the natural meaning of this being, that Ananias might have done with it what he pleased. His sin did not consist in giving only part of the price to the apostles, but in pretending that, in giving that part, he was giving the whole. This community of goods, then, was not a matter of law, but of love. As Neander well observes, "the community of goods practised by the first Christians, whatever form we suppose it to have taken, was something that was formed from within: it was the natural expression of a spirit which bound them all to one another. Everything here must have proceeded from the power of the one Spirit, must have depended solely on the free act of the pure disposition; nothing was effected by the force of outward law."

And further still, it does not appear that this community of goods was a universal custom, so that all the disciples (not of constraint, but voluntarily) disposed of their possessions, and put the proceeds into one common fund. Certainly, at first sight, the words "such as were possessors of fields and houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet," seem to favour such a view. (See also Acts ii. 44, 45.) But if this were the case, the goods of the church would soon have been consumed; nor would the instance of Barnabas have been adduced as anything remarkable. We read also afterwards of Mary the mother of John, surnamed Mark, possessing a house in Jerusalem (Acts xii. 12). But although not a universal custom, yet it was probably pretty general. Many, though not all, sold their houses and possessions, and put the money in a common fund, which was placed at the disposal of the apostles.

It would appear, then, that by the community of goods is meant, not that the disciples lived in common, and that all property ceased among them, but that a common fund was

instituted. The disciples were actuated by the spirit of love toward each other, which impelled them to regard the necessities of their brethren as their own. Not only did they give largely of their wealth, but many placed the whole of it at the disposal of the apostles. "In the Acts of the Apostles," says St. Jerome, "when the blood of our Lord was yet warm, and a young faith was glowing in the believers, they sold all their possessions, and laid the price of them at the apostles' feet, to show that money was worthy of no regard." Out of this common fund the wants of the poor were supplied; there was a daily distribution to the widows (ch. vi. 1); there was none among the disciples that needed (ch. iv. 34). Perhaps also the expenses of the Agapæ were defrayed out of it: for we find that it was afterwards the custom for the rich to bring of their provisions to supply the wants of their poorer brethren. Thus, in the first glow of Christian life, the disciples put into actual practice the precept of our Lord: "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide for yourselves bags that wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth" (Luke xii. 33).

Grotius, Heinrichs, and other writers, suppose that the church borrowed this idea of a community of goods from the Essenes. We learn from Josephus that this Jewish sect possessed such an institution. "These men," he observes, "are despisers of riches. Nor is there any one to be found among them who has more than another: for it is a law among them, that those who come to them must let what they have be common to the whole order; insomuch that among them all there is no appearance of poverty or excess of riches, but every one's possessions are intermingled with every other's possessions: and so there is, as it were, one patrimony among all the brethren" (*Bell. Jud.* ii. 8. 3). But this community of the Essenes was with them a compulsory act: it was founded on law, not on voluntary offerings. And besides, there is no trace of a connection between the apostles and that sect. It does not appear that at this time the church had come in contact with them.

In every age of the church there have been imitations of this community of goods, such as the various orders of monks, the mendicant friars, the Apostolici, etc.; but they have all failed, because they interpreted that as an institution of permanent and universal obligation, which was only designed to meet a present emergency; and because, moreover, they attempted to regulate by law that which, to succeed at all, must proceed from voluntary love: they made that a matter of external regulations, which can only be effected by the power of love operating from within. But although the external practice of community of goods is by no means to be imitated, yet the spirit of love which gave rise to it is to be imbibed. We should, like these early Christians, regard our possessions as not our own, but as given us by God, to be employed in His service, and for the good of our brethren; and thus, in this sense, “no one should say that ought of the things which he possessed was his own,” but that all should be employed for the common good.<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 36. Ἰωσήφ, ὁ ἐπικληθεὶς Βαρνάβας—*Joseph, who was called Barnabas.* This is the well-known Barnabas, the companion of Paul. He has been confounded with Joseph Barsabbas, one of the candidates for the apostleship (Acts i. 23); but the names are entirely different. The name Barnabas was given to him by the apostles, in a similar manner as the names Peter and Boanerges were given by our Lord. The word is compounded of Bar and Nabi, and literally signifies the son of a prophet, or of prophecy. It is here translated by Luke υἱὸς παρακλήσεως, that is, the son of exhortation or consolation; for the word παράκλησις includes both ideas. According to the New Testament language, prophecy is not so much the prediction of the future, as an inspired discourse—spiritual insight—and consequently embraces both exhortation and consolation; and therefore Luke, in his interpretation of the name, might well use the word παράκλησις instead of προφητεία (Olshausen). Barnabas was probably so called on account of his remarkable

<sup>1</sup> There is an excellent and exhaustive note on the community of goods in Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, pp. 77–79, Dritte Auflage.

powers of exhorting the people, and administering to them consolation. (See Acts xi. 23.) Elsewhere he is designated a prophet (Acts xiii. 1). He is here said to be a Levite, as distinguished perhaps from a priest; and a native of Cyprus, and therefore a Hellenist. According to tradition, he was one of our Lord's seventy disciples. "It is unnecessary," observes Clemens Alexandrinus, "for me to use more words, when I can bring forward the apostolic Barnabas: for he was one of the seventy, and a fellow-worker with Paul" (Clem. Alex. *Strom.* ii.). "No catalogue," says Eusebius, "is given of the seventy disciples: Barnabas is said to be one of them, of whom there is distinguished notice in the Acts of the Apostles" (*Hist. Eccl.* i. 12).

There is an epistle still extant which claims to have been written by Barnabas. It is often quoted by the Fathers, especially by Clemens Alexandrinus and Origen. Eusebius in one portion of his history regards it as spurious (*Hist. Eccl.* iii. 26), and in another place he says that its genuineness is disputed (*Hist. Eccl.* vi. 14). Its authenticity is now generally given up, and it is regarded as a work of the second century.<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 37. Ἰπάρχοντος αὐτῷ ἀγροῦ, etc.—*having a field, sold it.* Baumgarten supposes that it was not allowable for him as a Levite to possess land, and that therefore he sold his possession, and delivered the proceeds to the apostles. But this, from the well-known instance of Jeremiah to the contrary (Jer. xxxii. 7), appears to be a mistaken notion. And if, before the captivity, the priests and Levites were accustomed to possess lands, this custom would prevail afterwards to a greater extent, when the special provisions of the law of Moses concerning heritages could not be strictly observed. The question arises, Why, if believers in general sold their possessions, is this instance of Barnabas so prominently brought forward? Meyer supposes that he is mentioned

<sup>1</sup> The Epistle of Barnabas does not, we think, after a careful perusal, bear any internal marks of spuriousness, and does not appear, as has been asserted, to be the work of an Ebionite. The sentiments contained in it are in agreement with the writings of the apostles.



only as an example of what was general, so that there was nothing remarkable in what he did. But it rather appears that he is here distinguished from others, and held forth as an illustrious example. He surpassed the other disciples in his generosity ; either because the sacrifice which he made was greater and more complete, or because the sale of possessions was not universal, or because he set a striking and edifying example.

## SECTION IX.

### INTERNAL DANGER AND EXTERNAL PROGRESS OF THE CHURCH.—Acts v. 1-16.

1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 And purloined part of the price, his wife also being aware of it; and having brought a certain part, laid it at the feet of the apostles. 3 But Peter said, Ananias, wherefore has Satan filled thine heart to deceive the Holy Ghost, and to purloin part of the price of the land? 4 When it remained, was it not thine own? and when it was sold, was it not in thy power? Wherefore hast thou entertained this thing in thy heart? Thou hast not lied to men, but to God. 5 And Ananias hearing these words, falling down, expired: and great fear came on all who heard it. 6 And the young men arising, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. 7 And it came to pass, after the interval of about three hours, his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. 8 And Peter answered her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yes, for so much. 9 Then Peter said to her, Wherefore have ye concerted together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. 10 Then immediately she fell down at his feet, and expired; and the young men coming in found her dead, and having carried her out, buried her by her husband. 11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon all who heard these things.

12 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people. And they were all together in Solomon's porch. 13 But of the rest no one presumed to join themselves to them: but the people magnified them. 14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, a multitude both of men and women; 15 So that they brought forth the sick to the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least, as Peter passed, his shadow might overshadow some of them. 16 There came together also a multitude from the neighbouring cities to Jerusalem, bringing the sick, and those who were vexed with unclean spirits: who were all healed.

#### EXEGETICAL REMARKS.

The external danger to which the church was exposed by the hostility of the rulers had only the effect of increasing

its boldness and confidence in Christ; but now an internal danger arises much more to be dreaded. The most noble virtue of the church—its unselfishness—is in danger of being perverted; and covetousness and falsehood display themselves in the matter of the community of goods. “These things,” observes Calvin, “which Luke hath hitherto reported, did show that that company which was gathered together in the name of Christ was rather a company of angels than of men. Moreover, that was incredible virtue, that the rich did despoil themselves of their own accord, not only of their money, but also of their land, that they might relieve the poor. But now he showeth that Satan had invented a shift to get into that holy company, and that under the colour of such excellent virtue.”<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 1. Ἀνὴρ δέ τις Ἀνανίας, etc.—*But a certain man named Ananias.* Ananias is introduced as a contrast to Barnabas. Barnabas freely disposed of his possession for the good of the church; but (δέ) a certain man named Ananias acted differently. We are not informed who Ananias was; but it is probable that he was one of the richer members of the church, as he had landed property to dispose of.

Ver. 2. Ἐπώλησε κτῆμα, καὶ ἐνοσφίσατο ἀπὸ τῆς τιμῆς—*sold a possession, and purloined part of the price.* The sin of Ananias consisted in this: he sold his possession professedly for the good of the church; but instead of giving the whole sum, he retained a part for himself, and the other part he laid at the apostles’ feet, pretending that it was the whole amount which he had received. His sin did not consist in retaining part of the price—he was at liberty to give or not to give, as he pleased: he might with a safe conscience have given either the whole or a part—there was in this matter no compulsion. But his guilt lay in the falsehood of his assertion that the part which he actually gave was the whole—in his attempt to deceive the apostles, who were under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. It is not mentioned how much he retained, but probably it was only a small portion,

<sup>1</sup> Calvin’s *Commentaries*—Acts v. 1.

as otherwise it would have appeared that he had sold his land for too small a sum, and consequently might have been suspected.

The motive which induced Ananias to commit this sin was vanity, or the love of ostentation. Seeing others giving liberally for the support of the church, he desired also to be looked upon as charitable and liberal. He was in reality covetous, and yet he wished to be regarded as charitable; and hence it was that he played the hypocrite. "It is probable," as Olshausen observes, "that among the new Christians a kind of holy rivalry had sprung up: every one was eager to place his superfluous means at the disposal of the church. Now this zeal actuated many a one who was not in heart properly freed from attachment to earthly things; and thus it happened that Ananias, too, sold some property, but afterwards secretly kept back part of the price. Vanity was the motive of the sale, hypocrisy the motive of the concealment. He wished to appear as disinterested as others, and yet he could not let go his hold of mammon."<sup>1</sup> Lechler supposes, that actuated by generous motives he sold his possession; but that when he received the money his covetousness was excited, and he could not think of parting with the whole of it.

Ver. 3. *Εἶπε δὲ Πέτρος*—*but Peter said*. Peter discerns his falsehood. It is not said how Peter obtained his knowledge; but the words imply that it was by divine inspiration, because he not only recognised the crime, but its heinousness, and the corrupt disposition from which it arose. *Διατί ἐπλήρωσαν ὁ Σατανᾶς τὴν καρδίαν σου*—*Wherefore has Satan filled thine heart?* The question is one of stern reproof: Why hast thou permitted Satan to do it?—implying that he might have resisted Satan. All that Satan can do is to tempt, not to constrain men to sin (Jas. iv. 7; 1 Pet. v. 9). Ananias should have had his heart filled with the Holy Ghost, instead of permitting Satan to take possession of it. *Ψευσασθαί σε τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον*—*to deceive the Holy Ghost*; not, as in the authorized version, *to lie to the Holy*

<sup>1</sup> Olshausen's *Commentary on the Gospels and Acts*, vol. iv. p. 297.



*Ghost.* *Ψευσασθαί* constructed with the dative is *to lie to*; but constructed with the accusative, it is *to deceive* (Lechler, Robinson's *Lexicon*). This expresses the design of Satan in filling the heart: it was to deceive the Holy Ghost, that is, the apostles, who were actuated by the Holy Ghost. "He," says Paul, "that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us His Holy Spirit" (1 Thess. iv. 8). And so also the attempt to deceive Peter and the other apostles was in reality an attempt to deceive the Holy Ghost, who resided within them.

Ver. 4. *Οὐχὶ μένον, σοὶ ἔμενεν*—*When it remained, was it not thine own?* It evidently appears from this that the disciples were not obliged by an apostolic command to sell their goods, and to put their money into a common fund. Ananias might have done with his field and money what he pleased. *Τί ὅτι ἔθου ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου τὸ πρᾶγμα τοῦτο*—literally, *Why hast thou put this thing in thy heart?* Why hast thou permitted such a sinful idea to take possession of thy mind? There is no contradiction between this and the fact that it was Satan who filled his heart. Satan suggested the idea, and Ananias entertained it in his heart. *Οὐκ ἐψεύσω ἀνθρώποις, ἀλλὰ τῷ Θεῷ*—*Thou hast not lied to men, but to God.* The expression is not to be weakened, as if it meant only that Ananias lied not so much unto men as unto God; but that his sin against men was nothing in comparison with his sin against God. So also David, even in the case of the murder of Uriah, takes the same view of his guilt: "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight" (Ps. li. 4). As Lange well observes, "the objective weight of his guilt does not consist in this, that by this embezzlement he became a deceiver of the brethren. This vileness vanishes, as if it were nothing compared with the wickedness that he ventured by fraud to attempt to deceive the Spirit of the church."<sup>1</sup>

This verse has been often and justly quoted as a proof of the personality and divinity of the Holy Ghost. If he that deceiveth or lieth to the Holy Ghost, deceiveth or lieth not

<sup>1</sup> Lange's *das apostolische Zeitalter*, vol. ii. p. 65.

to man, but to God, it is a proof that the Holy Ghost is God. In attempting to deceive Peter and the other apostles, Ananias lied unto men; but in attempting to deceive the Holy Ghost, he lied unto God.<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 5. The sudden death of Ananias has been variously understood. Some (Ammon, Heinrichs) suppose that it was a stroke of apoplexy, brought on by terror and the unexpected disclosure of his hypocrisy. But this does not account for the death of Sapphira, inasmuch as it was expressly foretold by Peter; and besides, it would suppose that two persons were equally susceptible to such an unusual effect of terror. Most German critics (Lange, Olshausen, Neander, Baumgarten, Lechler) suppose that here the natural and the supernatural were united; that the psychological aspect of the case—the effect which the discovery of his hypocrisy would have upon Ananias—ought not to be overlooked. “When,” observes Neander, “we reflect what Peter was in the eyes of Ananias, how the superstitious hypocrite must have been confounded and thunderstruck to see his falsehood detected, how the holy denunciations of a man speaking to his conscience, with such divine confidence, must have acted on his terrified feelings, we shall not find it very difficult to conceive how the words of the apostle would produce so great an effect. The divine and the natural seem here to have been closely connected.”<sup>2</sup> But we do not see how this opinion essentially differs from that of the Rationalists, that the death was merely a natural occurrence. The design of the entire narrative (as is especially seen in the case of Sapphira) is to represent the death of Ananias as a direct act of God, inflicted on him by reason of his sin (De Wette, Meyer).

But here arises the question as to Peter’s connection with the death of Ananias. Were his words an actual sentence of death, miraculously carried into execution? Meyer asserts that the sudden death of the two is to be regarded as a result effected by the will of the apostle, by means of

<sup>1</sup> See the excellent remarks of Bengel on this subject.

<sup>2</sup> Neander’s *Planting of the Church*, vol. i. p. 28, Bohn’s edition.

the miraculous power residing within him ; and that especially in the case of Sapphira, Peter, without the consciousness of his will being here an active element, could not have addressed her as he did without the greatest presumption.<sup>1</sup> Others, again, desirous of vindicating Peter from a supposed charge, assert that all that Peter did in the case of Ananias was merely to disclose his sin, and in the case of Sapphira he merely foretold her impending fate (Baumgarten, Lechler). But although the statement of Meyer is too strongly expressed, it comes nearer the truth. Peter was here the organ of the Holy Ghost ; his address to both was an actual sentence of death upon them. It was not indeed Peter who killed them ; God Himself was the direct agent. It is indeed quite possible that, in the case of Ananias, Peter himself was taken by surprise when death was the immediate result of his address ; but this will not hold good in the case of Sapphira, for Peter expressly announced her death : “ Behold, the feet of those who have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.” Doubtless Peter would pronounce their doom with sadness ; but the burden was laid upon him, and he could not shrink from performing the duty. The same apostle who had himself fallen so deeply as to deny the Lord, was chosen to denounce the severity of the divine justice.

Ver. 6. *Ἀναστάντες δὲ οἱ νεώτεροι*—*and the young men arising.* These are the same who are called in ver. 10 *οἱ νεανίσκοι*. Some (Olshausen, Neander, Meyer, Mosheim, Kuinœl, Cook) suppose that these were official servants of the church, occupying a position similar to that of the acolytes at a later period. But there is no reason to believe that such an ecclesiastical order then existed. The only order as yet mentioned is the apostleship : the deaconship had not yet been instituted, and the eldership is not mentioned until ch. xi. 30. Hence the opinion of those, that the young men are here mentioned on account of their age, as being the most suitable to perform such an office, is to be preferred. So De Wette, Neander, Rothe, Lechler.

<sup>1</sup> Meyer, *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 113, Dritte Auflage.

Συνέστειλαν αὐτόν—*wound him up*. The meaning of the verb συστέλλειν is doubtful. The common interpretation is that of the authorized version, where the verb is used in the sense of περιστέλλειν—to prepare for burial, by washing, winding up in dead-clothes, etc. Meyer renders it *placed together*; and thinks that the young men laid out the stiffened limbs, in order to carry the body more easily away. De Wette renders it *covered him*, and the Vulgate *removed him*,—meanings which the word will hardly admit. Καὶ ἐξενέγκαντες ἔθαψαν—*and having carried him out, buried him*. By reason of their laws concerning the uncleanness of contact with a dead body (Num. xix. 11), the dead among the Jews were interred as soon as possible. It is still, in the East, the frequent custom to bury a person the same day on which he died, as corruption commences almost immediately after death, on account of the warmth of the climate. “Among the present inhabitants of Jerusalem,” we are informed, “burial, as a general rule, is not deferred more than three or four hours.”

Ver. 7. Ἐγένετο δὲ ὡς ὥρων τριῶν διάστημα—*And it came to pass after an interval of about three hours*. Three hours appear to have elapsed between the departure of the young men to bury Ananias and their return. This may well have been the case, as they had to prepare the grave; and particularly if, as is most probable, the place of sepulture was at a distance from Jerusalem. The Jews, in general, buried outside of their cities.

Καὶ ἡ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ, etc.—*His wife came in, not knowing what had happened*. His wife was privy to the fraud, but was ignorant of her husband's doom. How she could have remained ignorant of such a striking event for three hours after its occurrence, appears indeed strange; but circumstances which we know not might have been the occasion of it. Perhaps no one had the courage to inform her of the dreadful fate of her husband.

Ver. 8. Ἀπεκρίθη δὲ αὐτῇ ὁ Πέτρος—*And Peter answered her*. Her entrance into the assembly of the saints was equivalent to her speaking (Bengel). *Tell me whether ye*



*sold the land for so much?* pointing, as Meyer supposes, to the money still lying before him; or rather, for so much as Ananias said—for so much as he wished to put into the common fund.

Ver. 9. Ὁ δὲ Πέτρος πρὸς αὐτήν—*But Peter said to her.* Peter, as the organ of the Holy Ghost, announces her doom. As she was a sharer in the guilt of her husband, so she was also to be a partaker of his punishment. “*Wherefore have ye concerted together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?*” He expresses at once his surprise and detestation of their attempt to deceive the Holy Ghost. To tempt the Spirit of the Lord, is to put to the proof whether the Holy Spirit ruling in the apostles could be deceived. *Behold, the feet of them that buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out:* either a forcible expression, announcing her immediate death; or the statement of what was an actual fact, that the young men who had buried her husband were now on their return standing outside at the door.

Ver. 10. Ἐπεσε δὲ παραχρῆμα, etc.—*And immediately she fell down at his feet, and expired.* As in the case of Ananias, Sapphira fell down dead immediately after the address of the apostle. The language of Peter to her will not permit us to suppose that he was ignorant of the fate that awaited her; nor will the words allow us to regard her death in any other light than as a supernatural occurrence.

Ver. 11. Καὶ ἐγένετο φόβος μέγας—*And great fear came upon all the church, and upon all who heard these things.* Here we are informed of the effects which these judgments had upon the church and upon the world. Great fear came upon all the church: fear of the divine justice, and of the punishment which would befall all similar transgressors. The church is never happier than when the sons of falsehood are either expelled from it, or deterred from intruding into it. If its numbers are less numerous, it is an ample compensation that its members are purer. Great fear also came upon all those who heard these things. Those who were not Christians would be impressed with the idea that there was something supernatural about the apostles, and

thus would regard them with religious awe. "Without doubt," observes Bengel, "the rulers of the Jews also heard of these things; and yet they did not institute proceedings on that account against Peter."

The punishment inflicted on Ananias and Sapphira has been often denounced as too severe, and not in accordance with the merciful spirit of the gospel. Even in the early ages, Porphyry accused Peter of cruelty, and the Fathers undertook his defence. The same charge has been repeated in modern times by De Wette. "The cruelty," he observes, "formerly charged upon the apostle, and which is especially shown in this, that the husband was buried quickly, without the knowledge of his wife, cannot be justified on the ground that such a warning was necessary. Did Christianity at this time require such aid? Must the Holy Ghost kill sinners in the midst of their sins?"<sup>1</sup> But, as has been well answered, it is not Peter who is here animadverted upon, but God: God Himself was the direct agent in their deaths; Peter was the mere instrument employed. "The Apostle Peter," says St. Jerome, "by no means calls down death upon them, as the foolish Porphyry falsely lays to his charge, but by a prophetic spirit announces the judgment of God, that the punishment of two persons might be the instruction of many."

Still, however, it may be said that this is but shifting the difficulty. Simon the magician, and Elymas the sorcerer, were for similar, or even greater, crimes more lightly dealt with. Miracles of mercy, and not those of judgment, are more in accordance with the spirit of the gospel. "As to the death of Ananias and Sapphira," observes Dr. Davidson, "it is evidently set forth as the miraculous, instantaneous effect of Peter's words. This, with the harshness of the divinely inflicted punishment, which is out of character with the gospel history, prevents the critic from accepting the fact as historical—at least in the way it is told."<sup>2</sup> The following considerations have to be taken into account:—1. The sin

<sup>1</sup> De Wette's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 56, Dritte Auflage.

<sup>2</sup> Davidson's *New Introduction*, vol. ii. p. 243.

of Ananias, objectively considered, was by no means such a light crime as it at first sight appears. It was not only a falsehood, an attempt to deceive the apostles, but a complication of iniquity. There entered into it vanity and hypocrisy, covetousness and fraud, impiety and contempt of God. It was also a deliberate act of wickedness, preconcerted between him and his wife. 2. We must attend not merely to the actual sin, but to the person who committed it. Ananias was a member of the Christian church: he had, in all probability, with the rest received the Holy Ghost; and hence he was in the enjoyment of greater privileges, and under heavier responsibilities, than either Simon or Elymas. A sin committed by him was more heinous than a similar or greater sin committed by them (Olshausen: Heb. vi. 4-6). 3. The sin of Ananias was directly against the Holy Ghost. He was accused by Peter of deceiving the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost at this time obviously actuated the apostles. Indeed, there is some ground for the remark of Olshausen: "It almost appears as if the act of Ananias were represented as a sin against the Holy Ghost, which would explain the fact that all admonition to repentance, and all mention of pardon, are wanting. The apostles in this case only exercise the prerogative of retaining sin."<sup>1</sup> 4. But the chief reason of this severity appears to be, that the sin was committed at the commencement of Christianity. It was essentially necessary that the purity of Christianity should be protected and vindicated at its outset. In like manner, at the commencement of the Mosaic dispensation, similar severe punishments were inflicted. Nadab and Abihu were struck dead for offering up strange fire; Korah and his company were slain for opposing Moses and Aaron; and a man was put to death for gathering sticks on the Sabbath-day. On the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan, and the establishment of the worship of Jehovah in that country, Achan was slain for purloining a Babylonish garment. And therefore it seemed also fit that the first great offence under the gospel should

<sup>1</sup> Olshausen *on the Gospels and the Acts*, vol. iv. p. 298, Clark's translation.

receive an exemplary punishment. This would also most effectually deter any dishonest and hypocritical persons from joining the church; and especially any from doing so merely for the sake of receiving alms; not to mention that it would also prevent spies intruding among the disciples.

Vers. 12–16. This is a new paragraph, descriptive of the progress of the church, but in close connection with the preceding. These verses are somewhat intricate, and some of the statements apparently contradictory; and hence various attempts have been made to render them more perspicuous. Our English version connects the first part of ver. 12 with ver. 15, and regards the intervening sentences from καὶ ἦσαν (ver. 12) to γυναικῶν (ver. 14) as a parenthesis. But this is at variance with the laws which regulate parentheses among the Greeks. Lachmann conceives ver. 14 only to be a parenthesis; but, as Winer observes, the words ὥστε κατὰ τὰς πλατείας ἐκφέρειν τοὺς ἀσθενεῖς are as appropriately connected with ver. 14 as with ver. 13<sup>1</sup> (see note). Others, again, in defiance of all critical evidence, regard ver. 14 as an interpolation; and others suggest various unauthorized transpositions of sentences. The words are to be taken simply as they are; and there is no necessity to have recourse to any conjectures in the form of parentheses, emendations, transpositions, or interpolations.

Ver. 12. Καὶ ἦσαν ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἅπαντες—and *they were all with one accord*. It is doubtful who are meant by ἅπαντες. Some (Baur, Kuinöl, Alford, Hackett) suppose that the apostles only are meant. They are the last mentioned, and consequently the word *all* seems naturally to refer to them as its antecedent. But there is nothing in the Acts to lead us to suppose that the apostles thus kept themselves aloof from the other disciples: on the contrary, we are, a few verses before, informed that all the disciples were of one heart and of one soul. By ἅπαντες, then, is rather to be understood the disciples in general, as is the case in ch. ii. 1, where the same words are employed. The objection to this

<sup>1</sup> See Winer's *Grammar of the New Testament*, p. 586, Clark's translation.



opinion is, that the disciples were now so numerous, that those in charge of the temple would not permit them to crowd together in Solomon's porch. But to this it may be answered, that, on the one hand, it is not to be understood absolutely that all the disciples were present at the same time; and, on the other hand, we are expressly informed that at this period the people were impressed with a sense of religious awe toward the disciples, on account of which they would leave them undisturbed. Perhaps the great number of the disciples was the very reason why they assembled in a court so capacious as that of Solomon's porch. (See note to Acts iii. 11.)

Ver. 13. *Τῶν δὲ λοιπῶν*—*but of the rest no one presumed to join himself to them.* Different meanings have been attached to *τῶν λοιπῶν*. According to some (Baur, Lightfoot, and others), believers are meant: "none of the rest of the disciples ventured to equal themselves to the apostles:" they kept at a distance from them, regarding them as superhuman. But this opinion gives an evidently erroneous view of the relation between the apostles and the church; and besides, the verb *κολλάω* does not mean *to equal* or *compare with*, but *to associate* or *unite with*. Others (Kuinoel, Alford) understand the rest who were in Solomon's porch to be partly believers and partly unbelievers; but this opinion depends upon understanding *ἅπαντες* of the previous verse to denote the apostles exclusively. Others render it, "none of their enemies dare attack them,"—a meaning which *κολλᾶσθαι* cannot bear. Others restrict the expression to the rich and noble, that they were terrified by the judgment inflicted on Ananias, who belonged to their class; but this is an arbitrary supposition. If by *ἅπαντες* of ver. 12 is to be understood believers generally, then by *τῶν λοιπῶν*, as contrasted with them, is to be understood unbelievers (Bengel, Meyer, De Wette, Lechler). The meaning seems to be, that none of the rest of the people ventured on false pretences to unite themselves to the church: by the death of Ananias, an effectual stop was put to hypocrisy for a time.

Ver. 14. *Μᾶλλον δὲ προσετίθεντο*, etc.—*but believers were*

*the more added to the Lord.* The construction admits of τῷ Κυρίῳ being united to πιστεύοντες—*believers in the Lord were the more added*; but ch. xi. 24 decides for its union with προσετίθεντο (Meyer). By τῷ Κυρίῳ here is evidently meant Christ. The salutary fear of hypocrisy did not cause any temporary pause in the diffusion of the gospel: on the contrary, multitudes, impressed with its truth, were converted. It was a season of sifting: the gospel repelled some, and attracted others.

Vers. 15, 16. These verses record the miracles which were performed by the apostles, and especially by Peter. "Ὡστε—*so that.* "From the two facts, that the apostles were held in estimation, and the number of believers had increased, it is to be understood why the sick should have been brought out into the streets" (Winer). Stress is here laid upon the faith of those who applied for healing. In the case of the lame man, faith was subsequent to the miracle: here it preceded. Κατὰ τὰς πλατείας—*along the streets*; i.e., the sick were carried out from their houses to the streets. Ἐάν (καὶ ἐάν)—*if at least.* The expression is rhetorical: the sick were anxious that something belonging to Peter might touch them, even if it were only his shadow. Τὸ πλῆθος τῶν πέριξ πόλεων—*multitudes from the neighbouring cities.* Such was the fame of the miracles, that many from the cities adjoining Jerusalem brought their sick, *and they were all healed.*

The special difficulty connected with these verses is, that Peter's shadow is said to have effected miraculous cures. To this it is replied, that this was only the opinion of the people, and that Luke does not assert that the cures were effected by the shadow. But still it must be confessed that the impression which the words convey is, that the people not only sought for cures in this manner, but that these cures were actually wrought. There are analogous instances recorded in the evangelical history: as when the woman with the issue of blood was cured by the mere touch of the Saviour's garment (Matt. ix. 21, 22); and when cures were effected by handkerchiefs and aprons taken from the body of Paul (Acts xix. 12). The remarks of Lange on this

subject are judicious: "To the shadow of Peter," he observes, "a healing virtue is plainly ascribed for all the sick on whom it rested. But it is evident, first, that here only those are spoken of who had faith in the miraculous powers of the apostles; secondly, it is only mentioned as the opinion of the favourably disposed among the people, that even the shadow of Peter could heal; thirdly, it is indicated by the very form of the expression that they sought the laying on of Peter's hands, but that in case of necessity they would be content with his shadow overshadowing them; not to mention that there is something figurative in this expression, which points out the fact that the sick expected a cure from every contact with Peter."<sup>1</sup>

It is evident that in the early part of the Acts, and especially in this passage, a pre-eminence is given to Peter.<sup>2</sup> Here the other apostles sink into the shade; and Peter is brought forward as working miracles, so much so that a miraculous virtue is ascribed, whether in the mere opinion of the people or in truth, to his shadow. We do not see how this pre-eminence can be denied; and certainly we must not permit ourselves, from dogmatic views on the subject, to attempt to explain it away.

<sup>1</sup> Lange's *das Apostolische Zeitalter*, vol. ii. p. 67.

<sup>2</sup> See note to Acts i. 15.

## SECTION X.

### SECOND ARREST OF THE APOSTLES.—Acts v. 17-42.

17 Then the high priest arose, and all who were with him, which is the sect of the Sadducees, and were filled with zeal; 18 And they laid hands on the apostles, and put them in the public prison. 19 But an angel of the Lord by night, having opened the doors of the prison, and brought them forth, said, 20 “Go, and standing, speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.” 21 And when they heard that, they entered into the temple at the dawn of day, and taught. But the high priest having arrived, and they who were with him, summoned the Sanhedrim, and all the eldership of the children of Israel; and they sent to the prison to have them brought. 22 But the officers, when they came, found them not in the prison; and returning, brought information, 23 Saying, The prison we found shut in all security, and the keepers standing at the doors; but when we had opened, we found no man within. 24 But when the priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were in perplexity concerning them, what this thing would become. 25 Then came one and informed them, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are in the temple standing, and teaching the people. 26 Then the captain with the officers went, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. 27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the Sanhedrim: and the high priest asked them, saying, 28 “We have strictly commanded you not to teach in this name; and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring upon us the blood of this man.” 29 Then Peter and the apostles answering, said, “We ought to obey God rather than men. 30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, having hanged Him on a tree. 31 Him has God exalted by His right hand as a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God has given to those who obey Him.” 33 When they heard this, they were enraged, and took counsel to slay them. 34 Then there stood up in the Sanhedrim a certain Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, honourable among all the people, and commanded to put the



men out for a little ; 35 And said to them, "Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves, with respect to these men, what ye intend to do. 36 For before these days arose Theudas, saying that he was somebody ; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves : who was slain ; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nothing. 37 After this man arose Judas the Galilean in the days of the enrolment, and drew away people after him : he also perished ; and all, as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. 38 And now I say to you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone : for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will be overthrown : 39 But if it is of God, ye will not be able to overthrow them, lest ye be found even to fight against God." 40 And they were persuaded by him ; and when they had called the apostles, and scourged them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and released them. 41 And they departed from the presence of the Sanhedrim, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name. 42 And daily in the temple, and from house to house, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus the Christ.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

Ver. 18. *Αὐτῶν* after *χείρας*, contained in E, is wanting in A, B, D, *κ*, and is omitted by all the modern critics. Ver. 23. *Ἐξω* is considered as a spurious addition : it is omitted in all the best MSS. *Ἐπὶ* is attested by A, B, D, *κ*, and is preferred by Meyer, Lachmann, and Tischendorf to *πρό*, found in E. Ver. 24. *Ὁ τε ἱερεὺς καὶ* is omitted in A, B, D, *κ*, and erased by Lachmann and Bornemann ; but on account of the difficulty of understanding it, its omission may be accounted for, and hence it is retained by Tischendorf and Meyer: E has *οὐ ἱερεῖς*. Ver. 28. *Οὐ* is wanting in A, B, *κ*, and several of the most important versions, and is rejected by Lachmann and Tischendorf : it is found in D, E. Ver. 34. *Τοὺς ἀνθρώπους*, A, B, *κ*, is preferred by Tischendorf and Lachmann to *τοὺς ἀποστόλους*, D, E, H. Ver. 37. *Ἰκανόν*, E, H, is wanting in A, B, *κ*, and is erased by Lachmann and Tischendorf ; C and D have *πολύν*. Ver. 39. *Αὐτούς* is attested by all the best MSS. and versions, whilst *αὐτό* is weakly attested. Ver. 41. *Τοῦ ὀνόματος* without *αὐτοῦ* is by all the best critics regarded as the correct reading.

## EXEGETICAL REMARKS.

Ver. 17. 'Ο ἀρχιερεὺς. Here in all probability Annas is meant, in accordance with ch. iv. 6, although Caiaphas was nominally the high priest. Καὶ πάντες οἱ σὺν αὐτῷ—and all who were with him; i.e., not who were members of the Sanhedrim along with him, but who were united with him in this hostile attack upon the Christians. These belonged to the Sadducean faction. This sect, as Josephus informs us, numbered among its members the most influential among the Jews. It is not indeed precisely said that Annas himself was a Sadducee; and accordingly some suppose that he merely united on this occasion with the Sadducees in a common object to oppose Christianity, as formerly Herod and Pilate united against Christ. But certainly the most natural meaning is, that he himself belonged to this sect; and Josephus informs us that one of his sons was a Sadducee. "The younger Ananus," he observes, "who took the high-priesthood, was a bold man in his temper, and very insolent: he was also of the sect of the Sadducees" (*Ant.* xx. 9. 1). The Sadducees would be the most ready to exert themselves in persecuting the apostles, as they were most exasperated against their doctrine, which was in direct opposition to the opinions they maintained.

Ver. 18. 'Εν τηρήσει δημοσίᾳ—in the public prison. The Sadducean faction of the Sanhedrim made another attempt to crush Christianity. They arrested the apostles—that is, Peter, and others of them, as leaders of the Christians—and put them in the public prison.

Ver. 19. Ἄγγελος δὲ Κυρίου, etc.—But an angel of the Lord by night opened the doors of the prison. These words do not admit of any rationalistic explanations: as that a peal of thunder or an earthquake opened the doors, or that some secret friend—perhaps the jailor himself, or a zealous Christian—brought them out of prison (Thiess, Eichhorn, Heinrichs). Neander and Meyer, on the other hand, suppose here a mythical embellishment. "The fact of a release," observes Neander, "by a special divine guidance to

us unknown, became involuntarily transferred into the appearance of an angel of the Lord.”<sup>1</sup> Baur and Zeller conclude from the circumstance of the angelic interference, that the whole occurrence is unhistorical. All these are attempts to get rid of the miraculous in the narrative. The deliverance of the apostles at this time was similar to the deliverance of Peter on a subsequent occasion. Nor was it, as Baur objects, useless, as the apostles were immediately afterwards arrested; because it evidently filled their enemies with perplexity, and themselves with boldness and confidence in Christ.

Ver. 20. Πάντα τὰ ῥήματα τῆς ζωῆς ταύτης—all the words of this life. This expression is singular; as throughout Scripture “*this life*” is opposed to “the life to come” (1 Cor. xv. 19), whereas here no such opposition can be understood. Accordingly it is generally thought that the figure of speech called by grammarians a hypallage, is here employed; and that the words are used for ῥήματα ταῦτα τῆς ζωῆς—these words of life (Winer, Bengel, Kuinœl). Others put stress upon them, as being spoken by an angel, a being from heaven: the life which he himself enjoyed (Olshausen). Others as if they were spoken in opposition to the Sadducees: of this life which the Sadducees deny (Lightfoot). But the most correct meaning is, the words of this life which the apostles taught—the eternal life which the Messiah came to reveal (Meyer, Lechler).

Ver. 21. Συνέκαλεσαν τὸ Συνέδριον—summoned the Sanhedrim. The Sanhedrim was the supreme council of the Jewish nation, and especially legislated upon their religious matters. Although the Romans had deprived it of the power of life and death, still they recognised its authority; and among the Jews its decisions were held sacred, and beyond appeal. (See a former note on the Jewish Sanhedrim.)

Καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γερουσίαν τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ—and all the eldership of the children of Israel. Γερουσία signifies a council of elders, a senate, the eldership. The word only occurs here in the New Testament. Some suppose that, in

<sup>1</sup> Neander's *Planting*, vol. ii. p. 71, Bohn's edition.

consequence of the importance of the occasion, not only the elders who were members of the Sanhedrim, but the whole college of elders, were summoned to assist in deliberation (Stier, Meyer). But the existence of such a college of elders is doubtful. It is best to understand the expression as pleonastic: "the Sanhedrim, that is, the whole eldership of the children of Israel." *Γηρουσία τῶν Ἰουδαίων* is the phrase employed in the Apocrypha to denote the Jewish council, and which is supposed to be identical with the Sanhedrim<sup>1</sup> (2 Macc. i. 10, iv. 44).

Ver. 23. *Ἐν πάσῃ ἀσφαλείᾳ*: not, as Luther renders it, *mit allem Fleiss*; or the Vulgate, *cum omni diligentia*; but, *in all security*.

Ver. 24. *Ὁ ἱερεὺς*—*the priest*. (See critical note.) The priest by way of eminence, or the already designated priest; that is, the high priest, namely Annas. The word does not in itself imply the high priest; but this meaning is derived from the context. (See 1 Macc. xv. 1; Heb. v. 5, 6.) *Ὁ στρατηγὸς τοῦ ἱεροῦ*—*the captain of the temple*. The captain of the temple was, as we have formerly remarked, the Jewish priest in command of the temple guard. *Οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς*—*the chief priests*. These are generally supposed to have been the former high priests, and the heads of the twenty-four priestly courses. Perhaps they are the same who are called in ch. iv. 6, *ὅσοι ἐκ γένους ἀρχιερατικοῦ*. At this period the Sanhedrim appears to have been an aristocracy. It was, however, divided into two factions: the Sadducees, who were probably under the leadership of Annas; and the Pharisees, who appear to have been led by Gamaliel. *Διηπόρουν περὶ αὐτῶν*—*they were in perplexity concerning them*. *Αὐτῶν*, not neuter, *concerning these things*; but masculine, *concerning them*,—namely, the apostles. The extraordinary deliverance out of prison, even although they might have been ignorant of the angelic interference, filled them with consternation. The Sanhedrim was thus, instead of being prepared to adopt strong measures, thrown into a state of helpless perplexity. As St. Chrysostom observes: "Truly this makes good that

<sup>1</sup> So also *ἡ γερουσία τοῦ ἔθνους*, 1 Macc. xii. 6.



proverb, 'Evil do, evil fare,' as we may see in this case. Here were these men in bonds, set at the bar of judgment, and the men that sit in judgment upon them were in distress and helpless perplexity. For as he who strikes a blow upon adamant gets the shock of the blow himself, so it was with these men."<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 26. Ἐφοβοῦτο γὰρ τὸν λαόν—*for they feared the people.* The multitude were at this time so strongly in favour of the apostles, that they showed symptoms of stoning the captain of the temple and his officers; which, however, was without doubt prevented by the apostles voluntarily surrendering themselves. This was a surprising change which had come over the people, considering the eagerness with which they had demanded the crucifixion of Christ. Probably the numerous blessings which the apostles had conferred by the healing of the sick, their disinterested love toward each other as displayed in the community of goods, as well as their recent deliverance out of prison, had combined to impress the multitude in their favour. The Pharisees also, the popular faction, were for the present neutral. The lapse of a few months, however, gave another illustration of the proverbial fickleness of popular favour. The disappointment of popular expectations converted in the case of the apostles, as in the case of their Master, popular favour into popular animosity.

Ver. 28. Πεπληρώκατε τὴν Ἱερουσαλήμ . . . τούτου—*Ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring upon us the blood of this man.* The meaning of this charge may be: You would lay the responsibility of his death upon us, as if he were an innocent person, and we were his murderers. Or perhaps rather the apostles are here charged with exciting the multitude against the Sanhedrim: You would incense the populace against us, as if he were an innocent person whom we had murdered. So Meyer: "Ye would cause the blood of this man to be avenged on us by an insurrection of the people."<sup>2</sup> If the first meaning be the

<sup>1</sup> Chrysostom's *Homilies on the Acts*, Hom. xiii.

<sup>2</sup> Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 123.

sense of the passage, then the accusation was true; for the apostles directly charged the Sanhedrim with being the murderers of their Messiah. But if the second meaning be correct, then nothing could be more false; for although the apostles refused to obey the command of their rulers to preach no more in the name of Jesus, yet they passively submitted to whatever punishment was inflicted upon them on account of their disobedience.

Ver. 29. *Ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ Πέτρος*, etc.—*Then Peter and the apostles answered.* Peter here again speaks in the name of the apostles. He has recourse to his former reply, that God ought to be obeyed rather than man (ch. iv. 19); only he states it with greater confidence at the commencement of his answer, and as a maxim of universal application.

Ver. 30. Peter here applies the maxim to the particular case. *Ὁ Θεὸς τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν*—*the God of our fathers*, and therefore to whom obedience must be universal and unre-served (comp. ch. iii. 13). *ἤγειρεν Ἰησοῦν*—*raised up Jesus*. Some refer this to the resurrection from the dead, as the sentence which succeeds contains a contrast to it, and the exaltation of Jesus afterwards follows (Erasmus, Meyer). But then *ἐκ νεκρῶν* would have to be supplied; besides, the idea of the resurrection is involved in that of the exaltation, and the sentences seem to form a sequence in point of time—raised up, slain, exalted. Hence, then, the phrase signifies raised up, as the *Sent of God* (Calvin, Bengel, De Wette, Lechler). See note to ch. iii. 26. *Κρεμάσαντες ἐπὶ ξύλου*—*having hanged Him on a tree*. The cross is here designedly so called; because, according to the Jewish law, being hanged on a tree was esteemed an accursed death (Gal. iii. 13). The boldness of Peter is here very remarkable, when contrasted with his former timidity in the house of Caiaphas: there he denied his Master with oaths and curses; but here he accuses the chief priests and elders with being the murderers of their Messiah.

Ver. 31. *Ἀρχηγὸν καὶ σωτῆρα*—*a Prince and a Saviour*. See note to Acts iii. 15. There is no necessity, as Kuinœl supposes, to change the meaning of *ἀρχηγός*. The leading

idea is, that Christ is the founder or beginner of salvation. It is not, however, to be translated ἀρχηγὸς τῆς σωτηρίας—the *author of salvation* (Heinrichs). As a Prince, Christ bestows repentance to Israel; and as a Saviour, He gives forgiveness of sins. Τῇ δεξιᾷ αὐτοῦ—not to *His right hand* (Hackett, Wordsworth), but *by His right hand*. See note to ch. ii. 33. Δοῦναι μετάνοιαν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ—to *give repentance to Israel*. This does not mean to give place or room for repentance—to open up a way of access to God; so that through means of Christ's death the forgiveness of sins might be conferred on all who truly repent. But it means that repentance itself is the gift of God, in the same sense as forgiveness is.

Ver. 32. Αὐτοῦ μάρτυρες—either *witnesses of Him*, or better, *His witnesses*. Τῶν ῥημάτων τούτων—literally, *of these sayings*, namely the death and exaltation of Christ; consequently to be translated, *of these things*. The apostles were the eye-witnesses of them; to witness was their peculiar province. Καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα δὲ τὸ ἅγιον—and so is also the *Holy Ghost*. Two classes of witnesses are mentioned as distinct from each other, the apostles and the Holy Ghost. By the witness of the Holy Ghost is meant, not so much His ruling in the apostles, or His being conferred on those who believe, because such a testimony is borne rather to believers than to unbelievers; but the miracles which the apostles performed through the power of the Holy Ghost, and which miracles were the divine credentials of their mission.

Ver. 33. Διεπρίοντο—they were *enraged*; literally, *they were sawn through, or asunder*; hence *dissecabantur* (Vulgate). A figurative expression for being greatly enraged, exasperated. Compare διεπρίοντο ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν (ch. vii. 54). Ἐβουλευόντο—they *took counsel*: that is, they proposed to pass sentence of death upon them; which sentence, however, could be only carried into effect by the permission of the Roman government.

Ver. 34. Gamaliel is described by Luke as a member of the Sanhedrim, a Pharisee, a doctor of the law, and one who was had in reputation among all the people. We are also

elsewhere informed that he was the preceptor of Paul (Acts xxii. 3). There are two celebrated men of this name known in Jewish history. The first of them, or Gamaliel the elder, flourished at this period, and is almost universally acknowledged to be the person here mentioned. He was the son of the Rabbi Simeon, whom some, on doubtful grounds, suppose to be the same who took the infant Jesus in his arms;<sup>1</sup> and the grandson of the celebrated Hillel, the founder of one of the rabbinical schools. The Jewish writers concur with the sacred historian in testifying to the estimation in which this remarkable man was held, not only by the learned, but by the common people. He was called the "Beauty of the law;" and it is a saying in the Talmud, that "since Rabban Gamaliel died, the glory of the law hath ceased." He was not, however, as some suppose, the president of the Sanhedrim. Luke merely describes him as "one in the Sanhedrim." Although a Pharisee, he was, we are informed, liberal in his views, and addicted to the study of Greek philosophy. He died eighteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem, and retained his popularity to the last. He was held in such estimation among the Jews, that seventy pounds weight of perfumes were burned at his funeral.<sup>2</sup>

According to ecclesiastical traditions, Gamaliel became a Christian, and was baptized, along with his son Abib and Nicodemus, by Peter and John (Photius, *Cod.* 171). The *Clementine Recognitions* assert that he was at this time a Christian, and by the advice of the apostles remained in the Sanhedrim to act as a spy upon its proceedings. Peter, in this work, is represented as saying: "Which when Gamaliel saw, who was a person of influence among the people,

<sup>1</sup> The only reason advanced is, that these two Simeons probably lived at the same time.

<sup>2</sup> Josephus mentions Jesus the son of Gamaliel as high priest shortly before the Jewish war (*Ant.* xx. 10. 7); and Simeon, another son of Gamaliel, who took an active part in opposition to the faction of the Zealots (*Bell. Jud.* iv. 3. 9). The latter is also mentioned by Jewish writers, and is said to have perished in the siege of Jerusalem (Lightfoot).



but secretly our brother in the faith, and with our privity among them" (*Recognit. Clem.* i. 65). We are also informed that, four centuries afterwards, his body was miraculously discovered with that of the martyr Stephen. All these are idle traditions, without any authority. There is nothing in the counsel of Gamaliel to lead us to suspect that he was a Christian: his words are merely the language of a tolerant and sagacious man. The Jewish accounts, that he died a Pharisee, are without doubt correct.

The moderation and prudence of Gamaliel's disposition may have inclined him to favour the Christians; but perhaps also his pharisaical principles induced him. He seems to have been the leader of the party of the Pharisees in the council; and at this time the Sadducees were the chief opponents of the apostles. The preaching of the resurrection, which was the great cause of offence to the Sadducees, would be a recommendation to the Pharisees. And when we consider the hostile feelings which were between these two sects, we are not to wonder that at this time the Christians should be to some extent favoured by the Pharisees. Afterwards, however, when Christianity, in the person of Stephen, manifested its anti-pharisaical principles, the forbearance of that sect no longer continued; and we find Saul of Tarsus, a Pharisee and a disciple of Gamaliel, among the bitterest persecutors of the Christians. There is extant "a prayer against heretics," aimed against the Christians, said to have been either composed or sanctioned by Gamaliel; which, if genuine, is however not inconsistent with the character here given of Gamaliel, as the progress of Christianity, and especially the evolution of its anti-pharisaical tendencies, would necessarily modify the views of such a strict Pharisee as Gamaliel, and cause him to regard believers as heretics.<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 35. Gamaliel here warns the Sanhedrim against adopting violent measures toward the apostles. He tells

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot's *Horræ Hebraicæ*, vol. iv. p. 53—Maimonides. This prayer is given in Horne's *Introduction to the Scriptures*, 9th edition, vol. iii. pp. 273, 274.

them to let the matter alone : and that it will either, if of human origin, come to nothing of itself without their interference ; or, if of divine origin, that no opposition of theirs will prevail against it. But before stating this maxim, he first enforces the principle of non-interference by the examples of two political agitators, whose enterprises came to nothing, without any interference on the part of the Sanhedrim.

Ver. 36. *Πρὸ τούτων τῶν ἡμερῶν*—*before these days ; i.e.* not long ago—in the memory of some of you. “He does not recount ancient histories, although he might have done so, but more recent instances, which are most powerful to produce belief” (Chrysostom). *Ἀνέστυ Θευδᾶς* — *arose Theudas*. This example is quoted by Eusebius in his History, who compares the Theudas of Luke with the Theudas of Josephus (Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* ii. 11). *Ἀέγων εἶναι τινα ἐαυτόν*—*saying that he was somebody ;* that is, a person of consequence—perhaps a prophet, or the Messiah.

We now come to the consideration of a great difficulty : an apparent discrepancy between this account of Theudas given us by Luke, and the account given us by Josephus. There is a Theudas mentioned by Josephus, whose history agrees with that here stated of Theudas by Luke, but with an entire and irreconcilable difference in point of time. The account given by Josephus is as follows : “Now it came to pass, while Fadus was procurator of Judea, that a certain magician, whose name was Theudas, persuaded a great company of people to take their effects with them, and follow him to the river Jordan ; for he told them that he was a prophet, and that he would, by his own command, divide the river and afford them an easy passage over it : and many were deluded by his words. However, Fadus did not permit them to make any advantage of his wild attempt, but sent a troop of horsemen against them, who, falling upon them unexpectedly, slew many of them, and took many of them alive. They also took Theudas alive, and cut off his head, and carried it to Jerusalem.”<sup>1</sup> This narrative agrees with the account given by Luke. Theudas gave himself out to

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Ant.* xx. 5. 1.

be a person of consequence: the Theudas of Josephus called himself a prophet. Theudas was slain, and his followers dispersed; according to Josephus, Cuspius Fadus dispersed the rebels, whilst Theudas himself was slain, and his head brought to Jerusalem. The only difference in the accounts is, that the Theudas of Luke had only about four hundred followers; whereas the Theudas of Josephus persuaded a great company of people (τὸν πλεῖστον ὄχλον) to follow him. But whilst there is this agreement in particulars, there is an entire disagreement in point of time. The Theudas of Josephus lived in the reign of Claudius, when Cuspius Fadus was procurator of Judea, about ten years after Gamaliel made his speech. It is also to be observed that, according to Gamaliel, Theudas appeared before Judas the Galilean, who arose immediately after the dethronement of Archelaus in the reign of Augustus: so that a period of about forty years intervened between the Theudas of Luke and the Theudas of Josephus.

One class of critics (Wetstein, De Wette, Meyer) suppose an anachronism on the part of Luke. Luke, they assert, or the unknown author of the source of his information, in the account of the speech of Gamaliel, puts a proleptical mistake into his mouth. This, it is supposed, would occur the more easily, as the speech must have been handed down by tradition; and it is more probable that Luke has erred, who was at a distance from the scene of the history, than Josephus, in whose lifetime the event occurred. But it is extremely improbable that Luke should have committed such a gross error as a mistake of forty years, especially as he was an intimate companion of Paul, a disciple of Gamaliel, who could not be unacquainted with the celebrated speech which his master made on this occasion; not to urge the unimpeachable accuracy of Luke on other occasions.

Another class of critics (Michaelis, Lightfoot, Jahn, Du Veil) have sought for a solution in an opposite direction, and suppose that Josephus is in error. Josephus, it is observed, frequently commits chronological mistakes; and as he was only nine years of age when Cuspius Fadus left the govern-

ment of Judea, it is by no means improbable that he has confused names and periods. "Grant only," observes Lightfoot, "that Josephus might slip in his chronology, and there is no difficulty in the matter. Nor do I see why we should give so much deference to Josephus in this matter, as to take so much pains in vindicating his care and skill in it. We must, forsooth, find out some other Theudas, or change the stops in the verses, or invent some other plaster for the sore, rather than Josephus should be charged with the least mistake; to whom yet, both in history and chronology, it is no unusual thing to trip or go out of the road of truth. I would therefore think that the Theudas in Josephus is the same mentioned by Gamaliel; only that the historian was mistaken in his account of time, and so defaced a true story by a false chronology."<sup>1</sup> But this is a violent solution of the difficulty. Josephus is exact in the determination of time, and circumstantial in the details of the occurrence: so that a mistake on his part is improbable.

Calvin supposes that there is no discrepancy at all; and that the speech of Gamaliel occurred after the revolt of Theudas, as recorded by Josephus: that whereas Luke seems to place the revolt of Judas of Galilee after the revolt of Theudas, he proposes to translate the words *μετὰ τοῦτον*, *moreover* or *besides*: and that Gamaliel, in bringing forward two examples, puts the one before the other, without respect of time.<sup>2</sup> But such a solution is entirely at variance with the chronology of Scripture. The speech of Gamaliel must have taken place in the reign of Tiberius, and therefore ten years before the revolt of the Theudas of Josephus, which occurred in the reign of Claudius.

Various attempts have been made to identify the Theudas of Luke with other insurgents who lived shortly before Judas the Galilean, either toward the close of the reign of Herod the Great, or during the reign of his son Archelaus, and who are mentioned by Josephus. Thus Sonntag endeavours to identify him with Simon, who at the death of

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot's *Horæ Hebraicæ et Talmudicæ*, vol. iv. p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> Calvin on Acts v. 35.



Herod attempted to be king (*Ant.* xvii. 10. 6, *Bell. Jud.* ii. 4. 2); because there is a similarity in the particulars of this revolt with those mentioned by Luke concerning the insurrection of Theudas. This opinion is adopted by no less an authority than Ewald.<sup>1</sup> Wieseler supposes him to be the same with Matthias the lawyer, who, along with Judas the son of Saripheus, broke in pieces the Roman eagle placed over the gate of the temple (*Ant.* xvii. 6. 2); but the only argument which he adduces is the similarity in the meaning of the names.<sup>2</sup> This opinion is also embraced by Lange. Archbishop Usher, Whiston, and others, suppose that Judas the son of Hezekias is meant, who after the death of Herod seized upon the palace of Sepphoris in Galilee (*Ant.* xvii. 10. 5); as the names Theudas, Thaddeus, and Judas are all similar. And Zuschlag supposes that Theudion is meant, who was implicated in an attempt to poison Herod (*Joseph. Ant.* xvii. 4, 2). All these opinions are mere conjectures, supported by reasons which are by no means conclusive. As Winer remarks, "striving to know more than can be known, has produced only vague conjectures."

There is another solution which, although also a conjecture, is, we think, supported by better arguments than any of the above, and entitled to more consideration. It is supposed that there were two insurgents called Theudas: the one the Theudas of Luke, who lived in the reign of Augustus; and the other the Theudas of Josephus, who lived in the reign of Claudius. This opinion is adopted by Beza, Grotius, Hammond, Lardner, Whitby, Heinrichs, Kuinoel, Bengel, Guericke, Winer, Ebrard, Olshausen, Wordsworth, and others. The following are the reasons by which this opinion is supported:—1. The name Theudas, as Lightfoot in his *Horæ Hebraicæ* shows, was not an uncommon name among the Jews; and therefore it is not improbable that, among so many insurgents, two should be named Theudas. 2. Especially as, among the insurgents mentioned by Josephus, several of them possessed the same name: there

<sup>1</sup> Ewald's *Geschichte des Apostolischen Zeitalters*, p. 532.

<sup>2</sup> Wieseler's *Synopsis*, p. 103.

are four named Simon, who followed each other within forty years; and three named Judas within ten years. 3. At the death of Herod the Great there were numerous insurgents. Josephus mentions three of them by name; but he also observes: "At this time there were great disturbances in the country; and the opportunity that now offered itself induced a great many to set up for kings." "Judea was at this time full of robberies; and as the several companies of the seditious lighted upon any one to lead them, he was created a king forthwith" (*Bell. Jud.* ii. 4. 1, *Ant.* xvii. 10. 8). Hence it appears that there were many insurgents unnamed by Josephus, and one of these might have been the Theudas of Luke. To these reasons it is objected that it is improbable that two persons of the same name should make similar pretensions, and have a similar fate. But to this it is replied that these particulars are general, and suit several of the rebels mentioned by Josephus.

Ver. 37. As there is a difference between the accounts of Luke and Josephus concerning Theudas, so there is an agreement in their accounts concerning Judas the Galilean. He was the most celebrated of the Jewish demagogues, and is frequently mentioned by Josephus (*Ant.* xviii. 1. 1–6, xx. 5. 2; *Bell. Jud.* ii. 8. 1, ii. 17. 7). In one place he is said to be a native of Gamala; but elsewhere he is called, as by Luke, Judas the Galilean. Josephus styles him the author of a fourth Jewish sect, although his followers did not necessarily differ in opinion from the Pharisees. His political doctrine was, that God was the only ruler of their nation, and that consequently it was sinful to pay tribute to Cæsar. When Quirinus, the governor of Syria, caused an enrolment with a view to taxation, he exhorted the nation to assert their liberty, and prevailed with many to revolt. His fate is not mentioned by Josephus, but Luke here informs us that he perished. Although his followers were dispersed and himself slain, yet the faction was not destroyed; for he is considered to have been the founder of the political faction of the Zealots. Two of his sons, James and Simon, were afterwards taken and crucified by Tiberius Alexander, the successor

of Fadus (*Ant.* xx. 8. 2); and a third son, named Menahem, caused great disturbances shortly before the Jewish war, and was also put to death (*Bell. Jud.* ii. 17. 8).

Ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς ἀπογραφῆς—in the days of the enrolment. The enrolment here mentioned is that which took place when Quirinus was governor of Syria, and Coponius the procurator of Judea—after the dethronement of Archelaus, when Judea was converted into a Roman province. It was in consequence of this enrolment that Judas the Galilean revolted (*Ant.* xviii. 1. 1). This enrolment is different from that mentioned in Luke's Gospel (Luke ii. 2), and occurred about seven years later. The enrolment mentioned in the Gospel was a census of the population; the enrolment here alluded to was with a view to taxation, and to the conversion of Judea into a Roman province.

Vers. 38, 39. These verses contain the counsel of Gamaliel. It is the principle of toleration. Abstain from punishing these men: if their work is of human origin, it will come to nothing of itself, without our interference; but if of divine origin, no power of ours will overthrow it, but we will be found even to fight against God. Meyer supposes, from the different construction of the two clauses containing these alternatives—the former being in the subjunctive (ἐὰν ᾗ—if it be), and the latter in the indicative (εἰ ἐστὶν—if it is)—that in the opinion of Gamaliel the latter alternative, or the divine origin of Christianity, was the more probable.<sup>1</sup> But this seems to strain the words. Gamaliel states the alternative, without giving any opinion—as if the matter was *in dubio*.

This celebrated counsel of Gamaliel has been variously estimated. Some have judged it harshly, as if Gamaliel meant that success was the great criterion of truth (Schrader). But as applied to religious matters, it is in reality the great principle of toleration—that men are not to be punished for their religious opinions. It does not imply that other means might not be used, such as arguments, persuasions, etc., to convince the apostles; but merely that the Sanhedrim should abstain

<sup>1</sup> Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 130.

from civil penalties. As Neander well observes: "On the one hand, Gamaliel had a clear perception of the fact that all fanatical movements are generally rendered more violent by opposition; and that what in itself is insignificant, is often raised into importance by forcible attempts to suppress it. On the other hand, the manner in which the apostles spoke and acted made some impression on a man not wholly prejudiced; while their strict observance of the law, and hostile attitude toward Sadduceeism, must have disposed him more strongly in their favour; and hence the thought might arise in his mind, that after all there was something divine in the cause they advocated." <sup>1</sup>

The maxim upon which the counsel of Gamaliel is grounded has been applied to the propagation of Christianity, and has been esteemed an argument in favour of its divine origin. The counsel of the apostles has not been overthrown; therefore it is not a human contrivance, but of divine origin. The argument, however, is precarious. Mere success is no test of truth, otherwise Mohammedanism is of God. It is only when the success of any religion cannot be accounted for by human causes, that we are entitled to have recourse to divine interposition.

Ver. 40. The Sanhedrim were persuaded by the argument of Gamaliel, to which result his influence contributed. Perhaps also the recent wonderful deliverance of the apostles out of prison shook their opinions; and thus the hostility of the Sadducean faction was averted. They, however, scourged the apostles, in order that it might appear that it was not without cause that this prosecution was raised. They then dismissed them, with the repetition of the command that they should preach no more in the name of Jesus.

Ver. 41. *Χαίροντες*—*rejoicing*. The apostles, instead of being in the least dismayed, departed from the Sanhedrim rejoicing. They rejoiced that they had an opportunity of expressing so emphatically their attachment to the cause of Christ. *ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματος*—*for the name; i.e. for the*

<sup>1</sup> Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. p. 47.



glorification of the name—the name whose confession and announcement was always the highest and the holiest solicitude of the apostles: either the name Jesus, as last mentioned, in which they were forbidden to speak; or rather the sacred name Christ, or Messiah, for the confession of which they suffered. Ἀτιμασθῆναι—to suffer shame. The allusion is to the scourging; a punishment regarded by the Romans as so shameful, that it was forbidden to be inflicted on a Roman citizen; and among the Jews was also looked upon as disgraceful. It is called by Josephus τιμωρία αἰσχίστη—“the most shameful punishment.”

Ver. 42. Πᾶσάν τε ἡμέραν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ—and every day in the temple. The Sanhedrim could not in the meantime interpose its authority to check the preaching of the apostles; and hence they preached for some time longer unmolested in the temple. Κατ' οἶκον—from house to house. A contrast to “in the temple.” It refers to the private assemblies of the Christians in various houses, in different parts of Jerusalem. See note to ch. ii. 46. Εὐαγγελιζόμενοι τὸν Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν—preaching Jesus the Christ; that is, they announced that Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified, was the Messiah.

## SECTION XI.

### THE ELECTION OF THE SEVEN.—ACTS VI. 1-7.

1 Now in those days, when the disciples became numerous, there arose a murmuring of the Hellenists against the Hebrews, because their widows were overlooked in the daily ministration. 2 Then the twelve, having called the multitude of the disciples together, said, It is not agreeable that we should forsake the word of God, and serve tables. 3 Therefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint over this business. 4 But we will devote ourselves to prayer, and to the ministration of the word. 5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch; 6 Whom they set before the apostles: and having prayed, they laid their hands upon them. 7 And the word of God increased; and the number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly: and a great multitude of the priests became obedient to the faith.

#### CRITICAL NOTES.

Ver. 3. *Ἀγίου* after *Πνεύματος* is wanting in B, D, *κ*, and is omitted by Griesbach, Lachmann, and Tischendorf. It is, however, contained in A, C, E, H. *Καταστήσομεν*, A, C, D, E, *κ*, is to be preferred to *καταστήσωμεν*. Ver. 7. *Ἱερέων* is decidedly to be preferred to the weakly attested reading *Ἰουδαίων*, which, however, is found in the Sinaitic codex, and in the Syriac.

#### EXEGETICAL REMARKS.

Ver. 1. *Δὲ—but*. A contrast to the prosperous condition of the church mentioned at the close of the preceding paragraph. The enemies of the church—the Sadducean party—were for a time rendered inactive. External hostility had in

a measure ceased; *but* (δὲ) a new evil arose within the church—an internal dissension. *Ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ταύταις*—*in those days*. The time here adverted to is the period when the apostles were preaching unmolested in the temple. As the passage appears to be introductory to the history of Stephen, it was probably not long before his martyrdom; consequently in the year 35 or 36.<sup>1</sup> *Πληθυνόντων τῶν μαθητῶν*—*when the disciples became numerous*. The more the church increased in numbers, the greater the diversity of its members, and the more liable did it become to internal dissensions.

*Ἑλληνιστῶν*—*the Hellenists*. This word is derived from *ἑλληνίζειν*, *to hellenize*, “to speak Greek,” and translated in our version *Grecians*. The persons here called Hellenists are evidently those who were converted to Christianity from the Jewish religion; for as yet the gospel was not preached to the Gentiles. The word in the New Testament for the Gentiles among the Greeks is *Ἕλληνες*, translated in our version *Greeks*. Some (Beza, Salmasius, Lardner, Pearson) suppose that by the Hellenists are meant, not Jews by birth, but proselytes from among the Gentiles. The chief argument for this opinion is derived from Acts xi. 19, 20, where the Hellenists are distinguished from the Jews; but in that passage the reading *Ἑλληνιστάς* is doubtful. Besides, it is extremely improbable that there should be at this time in the church of Jerusalem any large number of Jewish proselytes. The Hellenists, then, are here contrasted with the Hebrews as regards language. As the Hebrews are those Jews who spoke the Hebrew language, or rather that dialect of it then current, the Aramaic—the Palestinian Jews; so the Hellenists are those Jews who, residing chiefly in foreign parts, had lost the use of their native Hebrew, and spoke the Greek language—the Hellenistic Jews. So Erasmus, Lightfoot, Grotius, Bengel, Kuinoel, Winer, Wieseler, Olshausen, Meyer, De Wette, Stier, and Wordsworth. Thus the distinction was not one of nationality, but of language. Both parties were Jewish Christians. The one party were chiefly

<sup>1</sup> On the supposition that St. Paul's conversion occurred about the year 37.

Jews resident in Palestine, and the other party were the Jews of the dispersion, including also the proselytes from among the Greeks who had become Christians.

The word *Ἑλληνιστής* occurs only two, or at the most three, times in Scripture, and that in the Acts of the Apostles. Here the Hellenists are distinguished from the Hebrews in respect to language. In Acts ix. 29 it is said that Paul, on his first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion, disputed with the Hellenists. Being himself a Jew of Tarsus, he expected to find more sympathy with them than with the more rigid Palestinian Jews. In Acts xi. 20 it is said that those who were scattered abroad came to Antioch and preached the gospel to the Jews only; but that some of them addressed the Hellenists. Modern critics, however, are in favour of the reading *Ἕλληνας*, the Greeks. It is probable, as Meyer observes, that as the acquaintance of the Greek Jews with foreign culture tended to lessen and overcome the Jewish narrowness of spirit, many of them would be the more inclined to embrace Christianity.<sup>1</sup> Still, as in Jerusalem they were few in comparison with the native Jews, they must at this time have formed the minority in the Christian church.

*Ὅτι παρεθεωροῦντο ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ*, etc.—*because their widows were overlooked in the daily ministration.* Some (Olshausen, Lekebusch) suppose that the widows are put by synecdoche for all poor and needy persons.<sup>2</sup> But this is an unnecessary supposition. They are mentioned just because it was the real or supposed neglect of them that was the occasion of the discontent. *Καθημερινῇ*, formed from *καθ' ἡμέραν*, is only found here in the New Testament, but occurs in Plutarch and the later Greek writers. The ministration here referred to is the distribution either of food or money among the poorer members of the church.

We are not informed whether the complaint of the Hellenistic Christians concerning the neglect of their widows was well founded; but it would seem, from the change in the arrangements, and the institution of a separate body of men

<sup>1</sup> Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 133.

<sup>2</sup> Lekebusch's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 93.



to manage the distribution of the charities, that there was some ground for it. We are not, however, to suppose that this neglect was intentional, arising from the self-conceit or positive ill-will of the Palestinian Christians (Meyer). We may conceive that for some time the apostles themselves had managed the distribution; but as the number of the disciples increased, they felt constrained to depute this business to others, in order that they might devote themselves more entirely to the ministry of the word: and thus, either from the neglect of the persons entrusted with this matter, or from the want of some regular plan, or from the increasing number of converts from among the poor, or perhaps from the natural jealousy between the two parties, this murmuring arose, and the complaint was made to the apostles by the Hellenistic Christians that their widows were neglected in the daily ministration (Rothe, Neander).

We have here the account of the first dissension within the church. Hitherto the disciples had been of one heart and one mind, but now this unity was broken. The dispute was between the Palestinian and the Greek Jews. There was a natural jealousy between these two parties. The Palestinian Jews prided themselves upon their pure nationality, and looked upon the Greek Jews as their inferiors. They were also much more bigoted in their attachment to Jewish notions; whereas the Greek Jews, by their intercourse with foreigners, had attained to a certain laxity of opinion. The fact that both parties were Christians, although it would undoubtedly moderate, yet did not destroy, their prejudices. In this dissension may perhaps be discerned the germ of those future dissensions which arose when the Judaizing Christians disturbed the peace of the church, and which at length, in the age after the apostles, resulted in the separation of the Hebraistic (Ebionitish) and Greek elements (Baur, Meyer, De Wette).

Ver. 2. *Τὸ πλῆθος τῶν μαθητῶν*—*the multitude of the disciples*. The complaint of the Hellenistic Christians being brought before the apostles, they summoned a general meeting of the disciples. Lightfoot supposes that by the multi-

tude of the disciples is to be understood the original hundred and twenty (ch. i. 15),<sup>1</sup> who alone, he thinks, are called disciples as distinguished from believers. But this opinion is not supported by the language of Luke: throughout his history the words "disciples" and "believers" are used as synonymous. Besides, we are informed that the proposal of the apostles was acceptable to the whole multitude (παντὸς τοῦ πλήθους, ver. 5). Mosheim and Kuinœl think that the church of Jerusalem was divided into seven congregations, that each of these congregations assembled in a separate place, and that each chose for itself a distributor of its funds; but this is a mere arbitrary supposition. The objection that the disciples were now so numerous that they could not possibly assemble in one place, is without weight; inasmuch as we are not informed where this assembly took place, nor is it necessary to suppose that in a general meeting of the Christians all would be present: the meeting would be chiefly composed of those who were interested in the matter.

Οὐκ ἀρεστόν ἐστιν—it is not agreeable (*non placet*). It was not agreeable to the apostles to neglect their chief duty, the preaching of the word, in order to attend to a subordinate matter—the distribution of the charities of the church. This also implies that the distribution could not now be carried on as formerly; that there must be a separation between the ministration of the word and the ministration of the charities; that the apostles could no longer attend to both.

Διακονεῖν τραπέζαις—to serve tables. Kuinœl supposes that money-tables are meant, and that the distribution was in the form of money; but the verb διακονεῖν proves that the reference here is to the distribution of food; and besides, if it were in the form of money, there would have been no use of a daily ministration. Perhaps there were several places in different parts of the city where there were apartments for eating, and where the poor were fed free of expense (Olshausen). The Agapæ would also be dispensed in the different places of meeting belonging to the church. The phrase also may

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot's *Horæ Hebraicæ*, vol. iv. p. 64.

be taken in a general sense, and imply an attention to the bodily wants of the poor. The money to defray the expenses of this distribution was from the common fund, established in consequence of the community of goods.

Ver. 3. Ἐπισμέψασθαι οὖν ἐξ ὑμῶν—*Therefore look ye out among yourselves.*—The election of the seven was not made by lot, as when Matthias was chosen to the apostleship; nor by the apostles themselves, as when Paul and Barnabas ordained elders in every church (Acts xiv. 23); but by the church at large. The reason of this probably was, that as it was a matter concerning money, it was prudent to allow the church to choose its own almoners.

Ἑπτὰ—*seven men.* Various reasons have been assigned why seven should be the number selected. Some suppose that it was because this was the sacred number among the Jews (Meyer, De Wette); others that there were now seven thousand believers, and that one almoner was chosen for each thousand (Bengel); others that the church of Jerusalem was divided into seven congregations (Mosheim, Kuinöl); Mede supposes that it has reference to the fantastic notions of the Jews concerning the seven archangels; and Lange supposes it to be either a contrast to the twelve, as a sign of official subordination, or to have reference to the seven days of the week. But all these are arbitrary suppositions. As Lightfoot observes: "Why there should be just seven, let him that hath confidence enough pretend to assign a sufficient reason."

The qualifications of these seven are here stated. 1. They were to be μαρτυρουμένοι—*men of good report*: that is, of unimpeachable honesty; literally, *attested*. 2. They were to be πλήρεις Πνεύματος—*full of the Spirit*; not in a low sense, "filled with a holy ardour," but inspired by the Holy Spirit—thoroughly religious men. 3. They were to be πλήρεις σοφίας—*full of wisdom*; that is, full of prudence—a virtue indispensably necessary for the performance of their special duties.

Ver. 4. The apostles, in thus setting apart a special body of men to attend to the wants of the poor, declare that they

would devote themselves to prayer and the ministration of the word. *Διακονία τοῦ λόγου* is here contrasted with *διακονεῖν τραπέζαις*. The greater duty is to be preferred to the less important.

5. Of the seven here mentioned, two only, Stephen and Philip, are elsewhere alluded to in Scripture; one, Nicolas, is mentioned in ecclesiastical tradition; the other four are totally unknown.

Stephen is famous as the first martyr of Christianity. He is here said to be *ἄνδρα πλήρη πίστεως*—*a man full of faith*; which is not to be understood merely in the sense of fidelity, trustworthiness (Kuinoel, Wetstein), because such a quality was essential in itself, and could not be considered peculiar to him; but of faith, in the scriptural sense of the term, as the root of all Christian virtues. It was the superiority of his religious character which recommended him first of all to the choice of the church. Stephen is here placed at the head of the seven, as Peter is placed at the head of the twelve. “See how, even among the seven, one was pre-eminent, and won the first prize. For though the ordination was common to him and them, yet he drew upon himself greater grace” (Chrysostom).

Philip is the same who afterwards preached the gospel in Samaria, and converted the Ethiopian eunuch. At a later period he is mentioned as resident in Cæsarea, and is alluded to as *ἐκ τῶν ἑπτά*—*one of the seven* (Acts xxi. 8). For the various traditions concerning him, see note to ch. viii. 40.

Nicolas is described as a proselyte of Antioch; that is, a Gentile by birth who had embraced the Jewish religion, and submitted to the rite of circumcision before he became a Christian. Salmasius supposes that the whole seven were proselytes: that whereas Nicolas is said to have been a proselyte of Antioch, it is implied that the other six were proselytes of Jerusalem. But this is a forced inference, arising from the opinion that the seven were all Hellenists, and that by this term is meant proselytes. It would rather appear that Nicolas was the only proselyte, and that the rest were either Palestinian or Hellenistic Jews.



According to ecclesiastical tradition, Nicolas is said to have been the founder of the impure sect of the Nicolaitanes mentioned in Rev. ii. 6, 15; but the traditions on this subject are various and contradictory. Irenæus asserts that he was the founder of this sect,—a statement which is also made by Tertullian, Epiphanius, and Jerome. Clement of Alexandria, on the contrary, mentions an anecdote from which it would appear that Nicolas was only the innocent cause of this heresy, which arose from a gross perversion of his words; and that he himself was noted for the purity of his conduct (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 29). Indeed, it is doubted by many whether the term Nicolaitanes is not a mere appellative, being the Greek translation of the followers of Balaam (Kuinoel); so that no particular sect of heretics is alluded to, but those in general who turned the grace of God into lasciviousness. Neander supposes that a certain Nicolas (a name common among the Greeks) might have been the founder of the sect, but not he who is spoken of as one of the seven.

It is to be observed that all the seven names are Greek. From this many have supposed that they all belonged to the Hellenistic faction of the church. Some (Mosheim, Michaelis, Heinrichs, Kuinoel, Olshausen) suppose that there were already almoners appointed for the Hebrews, and that it was the wants of the Hellenists only that were here supplied; but this arises from what we consider a false supposition—that there was an earlier body of office-bearers similar to those now appointed. Until the election of the seven, the apostleship is the only ecclesiastical office which is mentioned. Others (Rothe, De Wette, Thiersch, Stier) think that, by the impartiality of the Hebrew part of the church, pure Hellenists were appointed, in order effectually to remove all cause of complaint. But, as Lange well observes, this impartiality would be converted into a partiality of the Hellenistic party; and besides, might afford ground for future complaints on the part of the Hebrew Christians. The mere fact of the names being Greek is in itself no reason to conclude that the seven were all Hellenists, as it was customary among the Jews to have two names—the one Hebrew, and

the other Greek: two of the apostles, Andrew and Philip, who were certainly Hebrews and not Hellenists, are yet known to us by Greek names. It is then most probable that the seven were partly Hebrews and partly Hellenists (Meyer, Bengel, Lechler, Lange).

Ver. 6. Ἐπέθηκαν αὐτοῖς τὰς χεῖρας—they laid their hands on them. The imposition of hands, as a solemn dedication to office, was an ancient custom. It was employed by Moses when he set apart Joshua as his successor (Num. xxvii. 18). In the early church it was used on various occasions. Here the seven were solemnly set apart by the imposition of the hands of the apostles for their ecclesiastical office. Believers also received by this means the gifts of the Holy Ghost (Acts viii. 17). The ministerial office was conferred by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery (1 Tim. v. 22); and in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the laying on of hands is mentioned as a special Christian institution (Heb. vi. 2).

Ver. 7. Καὶ ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡύξανε, etc.—and the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly. All served for the increase of the church. The dissension within it was healed; its unity was restored; the spirit of love again influenced its members; and thus united in itself, the church made aggressive attacks upon the world. As Neander observes: “By this appointment of deacons, distinguished men of Hellenistic descent and education were brought into the public service of the church; and the Hellenists, by their freer mental culture, were in many respects better qualified rightly to understand and to publish the gospel as the foundation of a method of salvation independent of Judaism, and intended for all men equally without distinction.”<sup>1</sup>

Πολὺς τε ὄχλος τῶν ἱερέων—and a great multitude of the priests became obedient to the faith. This statement has appeared to many so very improbable, that various attempts have been made to neutralize it. Some, contrary to the rules of criticism, adopt the feebly attested reading Ἰουδαίων. Beza conjectures that the original reading is, πολὺς τε ὄχλος, καὶ

<sup>1</sup> Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. p. 35, Bohn's edition.

τῶν ἱερέων—and a great multitude, and certain of the priests,—a reading which rests on no evidence. Elsner and Kuinœl would translate the phrase as if it meant priests of the lower orders, *sacerdotes ex plebe*, as distinguished from the chief priests, ἀρχιερεῖς,—a meaning which the phrase cannot bear. The words must be taken in their literal sense, that a great many of the priests were converted to Christianity. We would certainly not have expected that numerous priests would have become Christians, considering the bitter resentment to which they would be exposed from their unbelieving brethren, and the loss of livelihood they would incur from being expelled from the priestly office. But, on the other hand, they were the better prepared for the reception of Christianity, by their superior acquaintance with the prophecies of the Old Testament.

It is a matter of dispute whether we have in the election of the seven an account of the institution of the diaconate; or whether the office here adverted to was merely temporary, to suit a present emergency. Various reasons have been assigned to prove that the diaconate was then instituted:—1. The expressions employed, διακονία καθημερινῇ (ver. 1) and διακονεῖν τραπέζαις (ver. 3), are considered to imply that the office is that of deacon. 2. The primitive church generally supposed that we have here the account of the institution of the diaconate (Ignatius, Irenæus, Origen); and for this reason they restricted the number of deacons in their churches to seven. Eusebius informs us that in his time the Church of Rome, whilst it had forty-six presbyters, had only seven deacons (*Church History*, vi. 43). 3. It is thought that the appointment of a mere temporary office would not be so important as to deserve such a lengthened statement. Equally strong reasons are, however, brought forward on the other side of the question:—1. It is observed that none of the seven is ever called by this name. Philip, when mentioned, is called, not a deacon, but an evangelist (Acts xxi. 8). 2. The office of deacon is never once expressly mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, and is alluded to for the first time in the Epistle to the Philippians (Phil. i. 1),—an epistle

written after the imprisonment of Paul at Rome. 3. There is only a remote resemblance between the duties and qualifications of the seven, and the duties and qualifications of the deacons, as laid down by Paul in his First Epistle to Timothy. 4. When Paul and Barnabas brought the alms of the churches to Jerusalem, they entrusted them not to the deacons, but to the elders (Acts xi. 30). St. Chrysostom supposes that the seven were neither deacons nor presbyters, but appointed for a peculiar emergency: "What sort of rank these bore, and what sort of office they received, this is what we need to learn. Was it that of deacons? And yet this is not the case in the churches. But is it to the presbyters that the management belongs? And yet at present there was no bishop, but the apostles only. Whence I think it clearly and manifestly follows, that neither deacons nor presbyters is their designation; but it was for this particular purpose that they were ordained."<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the truth lies between these two opinions: that the office of the seven was not that of the diaconate, properly so called, but that this latter office grew out of it. When churches became numerous, men with functions somewhat similar to those of the seven were appointed to watch over the temporal concerns of the church, and to administer its charities. This will account for the early church always regarding the election of the seven as the model on which the diaconate was formed.

The meaning of the word *διάκονος* is, a servant, an attendant. It frequently occurs in the New Testament; but only in four places is it used as an official designation (Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 8, 12, iv. 6):<sup>2</sup> in all the other places it signifies either a servant employed for temporal purposes, or a servant of God ministering to the spiritual wants of men. In the passage under consideration, the noun *διακονία* simply means *service*, *ministration*; and the ministration of the word is there contrasted with the ministration of tables—the spiritual service with the temporal.

The seven were appointed to attend to the distribution of

<sup>1</sup> Chrysostom's *Homilies on the Acts*, Hom. xiv.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps also Rom. xvi. 1.



the charities of the church. It was their duty to take the oversight of the daily ministration, and to serve tables. We have no particular information as to the functions of the early deacons either from Scripture or the writings of the Fathers; but the oversight of the wants of the poor was part of their duties. It is a matter of dispute whether the function of preaching belonged to the office of the deacon. Certainly it is evident that, in the case of the seven, the ministry of the word was included; for the two who are elsewhere mentioned in Scripture, Stephen and Philip, both preached: they were *διάκονοι τοῦ λόγου*. Just as the apostles, who devoted themselves to the ministry of the word, did not divest themselves of all care for the poor; so the seven who were specially appointed to take care of the poor, were not thereby excluded from preaching the gospel. Indeed, it would almost appear that at this early period there was no regular ministry, the office of the eldership being not yet instituted; but that those preached who felt themselves influenced by the Holy Spirit: in short, that the ecclesiastical offices grew out of the wants of the church, just as a present emergency led to the election and official consecration of the seven.

## SECTION XII.

### STEPHEN BEFORE THE SANHEDRIM.—Acts vi. 8–15.

8 And Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. 9 But there arose certain of them from the synagogue, which is called that of the Libertines, and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of them from Cilicia and Asia, disputing with Stephen. 10 And they were unable to resist the wisdom and the spirit with which he spoke. 11 Then they suborned men, who said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God. 12 And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes; and having come upon him, they seized him, and led him to the Sanhedrim; 13 And they set up false witnesses, who said, This man does not cease to speak words against the holy place and the law: 14 For we have heard him say that this Jesus, the Nazarene, will destroy this place, and change the customs which Moses delivered to us. 15 And all who sat in the Sanhedrim, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

#### CRITICAL NOTES.

Ver. 8. *Χάριτος* is found in A, B, D,  $\aleph$ , and is to be preferred to *πίστεως*, the reading of the *textus receptus*. Ver. 13. *Βλάσφημα* after *ῥήματα* is wanting in the most important MSS., A, B, C, D,  $\aleph$ , and is rejected by most recent critics.

#### EXEGETICAL REMARKS.

Ver. 8.  $\Delta\epsilon$ —*but*. No sooner was the internal dissension quieted, than a new trouble arose from without. *Πλήρης χάριτος*—*full of grace*: not favour with the multitude (Heinrichs), of which there is no mention, but rather the reverse, in the context (ver. 12); but divine grace, favour with God. *Καὶ δυνάμεως*—*and power*; power to perform

miracles, or Christian fortitude. Ἐποίει τέρατα, etc.—*did great wonders and signs among the people*. This is the first time that we read of any of the disciples, except the apostles, performing miracles.

Ver. 9. In this verse we are informed that Stephen entered into controversial disputes with the Hellenistic Jews in their synagogues. Hitherto the disciples had confined their public discourses to the temple and its neighbourhood; but now, after the example of their Master, they discourse in the synagogues. The disputes were carried on with the Hellenistic Jews. Stephen was, in all probability, of Hellenistic descent and education, and was therefore brought into direct contact with them. From the accusation brought against him, it would appear that he had freer notions concerning the Jewish law than even Peter and the apostles at this time possessed. No such accusation of an attempt to abolish the Jewish law had been preferred against the apostles: so far as it appears, they had as yet made no direct attack upon Jewish legalism. The Hellenists, as a body, were also much less bigoted than the Palestinian Jews, and it is probable that the gospel had more success among them; but we may well imagine that while the more liberal among them had passed over to the Christian church, the more fanatical and bigoted, such as Saul of Tarsus, remained obstinately attached to Judaism.<sup>1</sup> The subject of the dispute which Stephen carried on would doubtless be the proof from the prophecies of the Old Testament that Jesus was the Messiah; perhaps also he insisted on the necessity of faith and repentance as the only means of salvation, in opposition to the legalism of the Pharisees; and, as appears from his speech, he was very direct in his denunciations against all who obstinately persevered in unbelief. For these and similar reasons, he excited greater resentment among his hearers than had as yet been called forth against the disciples.

Λιβερίνων—*Libertines*. The conjectures which have been made concerning the Libertines are numerous. 1. Some

<sup>1</sup> Baumgarten's *Apostolic History*, vol. i. p. 130.

have had recourse to critical conjecture. Œcumenius, Beza, Clericus, would read *Λιβυστίων*—*Libyans*; but this is contrary to the authority of all MSS., versions, and Fathers, with the sole exception of the Armenian version. Schulthess supposes that the original text is *Λιβύων τῶν κατὰ Κυρήνην*—an entirely unauthorized emendation. The reading of the text, *Λιβερτίων*, is unquestionable. 2. Gerdes supposes that Jews belonging to a city or district called Libertum, in proconsular Africa, are meant. Suidas, a Greek writer of the eleventh century, explains the Libertines as the name of a nation; and in the Council of Carthage, in 411, there is mention of an *Episcopus Libertinensis*. But the existence of this place is problematical; and even if it did exist, the Jews would not have been so numerous as to form a synagogue in Jerusalem. 3. Lightfoot supposes that the Libertines were Jewish servants who had received their freedom from their Jewish masters; but against this supposition is the Latin name by which they are denominated, and the improbability that such persons should form themselves into a separate synagogue. 4. Grotius, Vitranga, and Selden understand by them, Roman freemen who had become proselytes to Judaism, and who were thus not Jews, but Gentiles by birth or descent. But if such were the case, we would have expected that the word proselytes would have been added; and besides, it is wholly improbable that any great number of Roman proselytes to Judaism should reside in Jerusalem. 5. The most probable opinion, which is also the most common, is, that by the Libertines are meant Jews or their descendants who had been led captive as slaves to Rome, and had there received their liberty; and who, in consequence of the decree of Tiberius, about the year 19, expelling them from Rome, had returned in great numbers to Jerusalem. Thus Chrysostom, Bengel, Kuinœl, Olshausen, Meyer, De Wette, Ewald, Lange, Lechler, Winer, Pearson, Lardner, Wordsworth, Alford. Multitudes of Jews were led captive by Pompey to Rome, and were afterwards liberated. Philo tells us that “the Roman Jews were for the most part persons who had been manumitted (*οἱ πλείους ἀπελευθερω-*



θέντες); for after having been brought as captives to Italy (by Pompey and others), they obtained their freedom from their masters, and were permitted to follow their religious customs unmolested" (*Leg. ad Caium*, p. 1014). Now Tacitus in his *Annals* relates, that "Tiberius took measures for suppressing the Egyptian and Jewish mysteries; and that a decree of the Senate was passed, by which four thousand of the descendants of manumitted slaves (*libertini generis*) were sent to Sardinia, on the pretence of checking robbery there; and the rest were ordered to depart from Italy, unless by a stated day they had renounced their profane rites" (*Annal.* ii. 85). This statement is confirmed by Suetonius. "Tiberius," he observes, "distributed the Jewish youths, under the pretext of military service, among the provinces noted for an unhealthy climate; and dismissed from the city all the rest of that nation, as well as those who were proselytes to that religion, under the penalty of slavery for life unless they complied" (*Tiberius*, 36). And so also Josephus asserts that "Tiberius ordered all the Jews to be banished out of Rome; at which time the consuls enlisted four thousand men of them, and sent them to Sardinia" (*Ant.* xviii. 3. 5). By combining these authorities, we learn that the Roman Jews were chiefly the descendants of emancipated slaves (Philo, Tacitus: Tacitus expressly calls them *Libertini*), and that they were banished from Rome about seventeen years before this by Tiberius (Tacitus, Suetonius, Josephus): and thus we can account for a large number of them being at this time in Jerusalem. As has been well remarked, they were likely to be the chief opponents of Stephen, by whose preaching, as they supposed, the religion for which they had suffered at Rome was endangered in Jerusalem (Humphry).

*Κυρηναίων*—*Cyrenians*. The Cyrenians were the Jewish inhabitants of Cyrene, a large and important city in the African province of Cyrenaica. One-fourth of its inhabitants, as Josephus informs us, were Jews (*Ant.* xiv. 7. 2). They had been settled there by Ptolemy Lagus. There is frequent mention made of Cyrenian Jews. The second book

of Maccabees is an abridgment of a larger work written by Jason of Cyrene (2 Macc. ii. 23). Simon the Cyrenian carried the cross of Christ (Luke xxiii. 26). Jews from the parts of Libya about Cyrene were in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 10). Men of Cyrene came to Antioch, and preached to the Greeks the Lord Jesus (Acts xi. 20). Lucius of Cyrene is mentioned among the distinguished prophets and teachers, when Barnabas and Paul were sent forth by the church on their missionary journeys (Acts xiii. 1). And here we are informed that the Cyrenians possessed a synagogue of their own in Jerusalem.

*Ἀλεξανδρέων*—*Alexandrians*. Alexandria, the capital of Egypt, and the seat of Hellenistic learning, was the second city of the empire. It contained a population of 300,000 freemen, with at least an equal number of slaves.<sup>1</sup> A large part of the city was assigned to the Jews, and their numbers are estimated at 100,000, or one-third of the free population. According to Philo, two of the five parts into which the city was divided were called the Jewish quarters (Philo, in *Flacc.*). The Jews were first settled there as a colony by Alexander the Great, who gave them equal privileges of citizens with the Macedonians themselves (Joseph. *Ant.* xii. 1); and this colony was afterwards greatly increased by fresh emigrations from Judea in the reign of Ptolemy Lagus. Under the first Roman emperors they possessed peculiar privileges: they had a governor of their own, called *ὁ ἀλαβάρχης* (Joseph. *Ant.* xiv. 7. 2), and a council to superintend their affairs according to their own laws. Josephus mentions Alexander, the brother of the distinguished Philo, as being in the reign of Claudius the alabarch of the Jews at Alexandria (*Ant.* xviii. 8. 1). Alexandria was the chief seat of the Hellenistic Jews, who were celebrated for their freedom of opinion and their cultivation of Greek philosophy. Philo, who may be considered as their representative, was at this time living in Alexandria. The rabbinical writers, as Lightfoot shows, expressly inform us that the Alexandrian Jews had a synagogue of their own in Jerusalem.

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon, ch. x.; Merivale, ch. xxviii.

*Κιλικίας—Cilicia.* This country is bounded on the south by the Mediterranean, on the east by Syria, from which it is separated by Mons Amanus, on the north by Lycaonia, and on the west by Pamphylia, from both of which provinces it is separated by the Antitaurian range. It was inhabited by numerous Jews, a colony of whom had been settled there by Antiochus the Great. Cilicia formerly belonged to the Syrian monarchs, but was at this period a Roman province, having been subdued by Pompey. It is particularly interesting to us as the native country of Paul; and nothing can be more probable, than that among the ablest of the disputants of Stephen in the synagogue of Cilicia, he would be found who afterwards became the greatest promoter of that faith which he now endeavoured to disprove and to destroy.

*Ἀσίας—Asia.* See note to ch. ii. 9. We must be careful not to confound the Asia of the Acts of the Apostles with that large tract of country afterwards called Asia Minor; a chronological mistake which many commentators have made.<sup>1</sup>

It is a matter of dispute how many synagogues are here mentioned. The language is indefinite. Some (Calvin, Beza, Bengel, Wieseler) suppose that only one synagogue is mentioned, to which all those Hellenistic Jews from these different cities and countries belonged.<sup>2</sup> This opinion arises from applying the words *τῆς συναγωγῆς* to the whole list. But this is improbable, when we consider the great number of synagogues which there were at Jerusalem; and especially that the Libertine, Cyrenian, Alexandrian, Cilian, and Asiatic Jews must have been so numerous, that one synagogue would not suffice for them. The words *τῆς λεγομένης* annexed to *τῆς συναγωγῆς* are most naturally to be restricted to the Libertines, inasmuch as this was not, like the others, a geographical term. Winer and Ewald, on grammatical grounds, suppose that two synagogues are mentioned: the one the synagogue of the Libertine, Cyrenian, and Alexandrian Jews; and the other the synagogue of the

<sup>1</sup> The term Asia Minor is first found in Orosius, a writer of the fourth century.

<sup>2</sup> See Wieseler's *Chronologie*, p. 63.

Cilician and Asiatic Jews. But the restriction of τῆς λεγομένης to the Libertines is opposed to this opinion. We therefore suppose that five synagogues are mentioned. The Jewish writers inform us that there were 480 synagogues in Jerusalem; a number which need not be considered as an exaggeration, when we reflect on the vast population of the city, and the attention which the Jews as a nation then paid to the external duties of their religion. The number of synagogues being so great, it is highly probable that each of these five classes possessed a separate synagogue, especially when we consider the vast number of Jews who resided in Cyrene, Alexandria, Cilicia, and proconsular Asia. Meyer infers from the grammatical construction of the words, that the opponents of Stephen from these five synagogues were arranged into two groups: one, those belonging to the three synagogues of the Libertines, Cyrenians, and Alexandrians (Roman and African Jews); and the other those belonging to the two synagogues of Cilicia and Asia (Asiatic Jews).<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 10. Καὶ οὐκ ἴσχυον ἀντιστῆναι τῇ σοφίᾳ—and they were unable to resist the wisdom. By the wisdom of Stephen is not to be understood exclusively his Jewish learning (Kuinoel, Heinrichs); but the Christian wisdom with which he was inspired, according to the promise which our Lord made to His disciples: "I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist" (Luke xxi. 15). Καὶ τῷ Πνεύματι—and the Spirit; that is, not merely ardour of mind, but the Holy Spirit, with whom we are informed Stephen was filled (ver. 5).

Ver. 11. Ὑπέβαλον ἄνδρας—they suborned men. The verb ὑπόβαλλω occurs only here in Scripture. Its literal meaning is, to *throw under*; hence to *put one person in place of another, to substitute*. Here it is to be translated to *instigate, to put forward by collusion, to suborn*,—a meaning not unknown in Greek writings. The Hellenistic opponents of Stephen substituted other persons: they kept themselves in the background, as if they were impartial disputants, and instigated

<sup>1</sup> Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 140.



others to accuse him. As they could not overcome him by fair arguments, they had recourse to low and dishonest means. Their design was to stir up the people against Stephen, and to bring an accusation against him before the Sanhedrim, as a blasphemer of religion.

Ῥήματα βλάσφημα—*blasphemous words*. The charge which these men made against Stephen was, that he was guilty of blasphemy; a capital crime, according to the Mosaic law (Deut. xiii. 6–10). He had spoken blasphemous words against Moses—that is, had attacked the Jewish religion; and therefore he had blasphemed God, as the Jewish religion was from Him. It was also for the offence of blasphemy that the Sanhedrim pronounced sentence of death against Christ.

Ver. 12. Συνεκίνησαν τε τὸν λαὸν—and *they stirred up the people*. This is the first time that we read of the hostility of the people toward the disciples. Hitherto believers were in favour with the people; the apostles enjoyed a certain degree of popularity: the pharisaic faction—the popular party—were at least neutral, if not favourably inclined; the great opponents of the Christians were the Sadducees. But now a change took place: the people became hostile. And the reason of this seems to be, that Christianity now came in contact with the Pharisees; Stephen, in particular, attacked Jewish legalism: the gospel displayed its anti-pharisaical side. The priests and scribes, who were chiefly Pharisees, were stirred up: the cry that the Mosaic religion itself was in danger, that this new sect was undermining the principles of Judaism, excited their hostility. And thus the popular party having become hostile, the people as a natural consequence became hostile also. “Until the time of the election of Stephen,” as Lange observes, “the Pharisees were somewhat favourably inclined toward the preaching of the Risen One: the popular voice was on the side of the Christians; and it was a very favourable symptom, that ‘a great company of the priests became obedient to the faith.’ Everything seemed to promise that all Israel would be converted. But entirely different was the state of matters after the appearance of

Stephen. He, in his discourses, brought prominently forward the insufficiency of the Jewish law and the temple, and attacked the unbelief of the Jews, and their guilt in the death of their Messiah, more strongly than Peter had done. Peter indeed had upbraided the nation with this guilt, but he had still more prominently brought forward the counsel of God in the death of Jesus. Stephen, on the contrary, insists more on their guilt in connection with their entire history, because he felt himself constrained to pull them, as it were by violence, from their present position. Hence it was that he was accused by the Jewish fanatics as an enemy of the Old Testament theocracy; and from this time we see the pharisaical party united with the Sadducees in bitter hostility against the Christians.”<sup>1</sup>

Certainly this formed an important crisis for Christianity. It was the first decided step that was taken in the direction of a separation from Judaism. Hitherto the disciples would be regarded as a sect of Jews entertaining the notion that Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified, was the true Messiah; but still attentive to the ceremonies of the law, worshipping in the temple at the stated hours of prayer, and frequenters of the synagogues. But now they are regarded as a hostile sect, the enemies of the Jewish religion. And in the providence of God, it was exactly this turn of matters which paved the way for the disruption between the Christians and the Jews, and for the wider diffusion of Christianity. This led to the preaching of the gospel by Philip and the Hellenistic Christians among the Samaritans, and even beyond the limits of the Holy Land; and this prepared Peter for the reception of the revelation that he should take the still more decided step of preaching Christ to the Gentiles, without insisting upon any intermediate conversion to Judaism. Henceforth Christianity was no longer the creed of a Jewish sect; but was to proceed, free and untrammelled, in its triumphant course throughout the world.

*Καὶ ἐπιστάντες συνέρπασαν αὐτόν—And having come upon him, they seized him, and led him to the Sanhedrim. The*

<sup>1</sup> Lange's *Das apostolische Zeitalter*, vol. ii. p. 77.

hostile Hellenistic Jews, having stirred up the people, now proceed to strike the blow. They arrested Stephen while he was engaged in his official occupations, and brought him to the Sanhedrim, which was the only Jewish court that could try capital offences.

Vers. 13, 14. In these verses we are informed of the nature of the accusation which was brought against Stephen before the Sanhedrim. They set up false witnesses against him, just as had been formerly done in the case of his Master. The general accusation was, that he ceased not to speak words against the holy place and the law; that is, that he unceasingly attacked the temple and the law of Moses; that he was not only heretical in his opinions, but decidedly hostile. And in proof of this general accusation, they adduce a particular saying of his: "This Jesus, the Nazarene, shall destroy this place, and change the customs which Moses delivered to us." The words *Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζωραῖος οὗτος* are not indeed to be considered as if they were intended to be the words of Stephen, but are spoken in a contemptuous manner by the false witnesses; not that *ὁ Ναζωραῖος* is itself an expression of contempt, but is so when combined with *οὗτος*: *this* Jesus the Nazarene (compare Luke xv. 30).

It is a matter of dispute in what sense these witnesses are called false; in other words, how far the accusation brought against Stephen was false, especially as the words reported contain the truth, inasmuch as the temple was actually destroyed, and the Jewish customs were abolished. Baur and Zeller maintain the essential truth of the charge, and accuse the historian of falsehood, inasmuch as he calls them false witnesses.<sup>1</sup> But the general charge, that Stephen attacked the Jewish religion, as if it were not of divine origin, was certainly false; and as to the particular words, we cannot suppose that he was so far advanced in Christian knowledge as to perceive that the Mosaic law was to be abolished: for this was a doctrine of which the apostles themselves at this time had no conception; so that there must at least have been a perversion of his words. The witnesses, then, were false,

<sup>1</sup> Zeller's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 146.

because they perverted some strong expression of Stephen; just as the false witnesses perverted the words of our Lord, when He spoke of destroying the temple, and building it up in three days. Stephen, in all probability, had denounced the legalism of the Pharisees, and had threatened the unbelieving Jews with the divine judgments on account of the heavy guilt they had incurred in the murder of their Messiah. But we do not learn, either from the defence of Stephen or from anything in the narrative, that he had attained to accurate notions concerning the abolition of the Jewish law, or even concerning the admission of the Gentiles without circumcision into the Christian church.

There must, however, have been something peculiar in the preaching of Stephen to have excited such hostility, and to have given rise to such misrepresentations. The accusation of the false witnesses was probably more a perversion of the truth than a gross invention. As a Hellenist, Stephen would entertain freer notions than his Palestinian brethren; and he appears to have insisted strongly upon the uselessness of mere formal observances in comparison with spiritual worship (vers. 48-50), and on the guilt and consequent danger of those who rejected the gospel (vers. 51-53). Probably also he dwelt upon the predictions of the Lord concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, and upon the calamities which threatened the Jewish nation. In short, his teaching was anti-pharisaical in its nature and tendency; and this stirred up against him the fanaticism of the popular party. "He was," as Neander observes, "the forerunner of the great Paul in his perception of Christian truth, and the testimony he bore to it (although far inferior to that apostle in the clearness of his view), as well as in his conflict for it with the carnal Jews who obstinately adhered to their ancient standpoint."<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 15. *Ὡσεὶ πρόσωπον ἀγγέλου*—*as the face of an angel*. When Stephen was brought before the Sanhedrim, all who sat in the council fixed their eyes upon him, from curiosity to see the new Hellenistic preacher; and they saw such

<sup>1</sup> Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. p. 50.



majesty and exultation in his countenance, as if it had been the countenance of an angel. Some (Kuinoël, Neander, De Wette, Lange, Bloomfield) suppose that this was merely a natural appearance; and that the phrase is intended to represent the serenity, dignity, and calm composure that were impressed upon the countenance of the illustrious martyr,—a dignity which evidently for a time commanded the respect of his enemies, and secured for him a hearing. Others (Lechler, Baumgarten, Hackett, Alford) suppose that the appearance was supernatural: that a heavenly glory shone from his countenance, somewhat similar to that glory which appeared on the face of Moses, or to that of our Lord when He was transfigured. Upon the whole, we are inclined to think that the holy martyr had a glimpse of that heavenly world upon which he was about to enter, and that his face was lighted up with a transport of inward joy: that the Spirit so filled his soul, as to impress a heavenly glory upon his countenance, such as we read has been the case with several martyrs and dying Christians. At all events, the glory, whether natural or preternatural, did not prevent his enemies from wreaking upon him the full fury of their malice.

---

### ON THE SYNAGOGUES.

*Συναγωγή* signifies a gathering, a collecting, and hence an assembly, a congregation. The word is now restricted to denote the assemblies, or, as we would call them, the churches of the Jews. There is no mention of synagogues until the return of the Jews from Babylon. The first mention of them by Josephus is in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes (*Bell. Jud.* vii. 3. 3). It is, however, probable that they arose during the captivity; as the Jews, then at a distance from the temple, would be constrained to build meeting-houses, where they might keep up their peculiar worship, in the idolatrous countries where they were settled. After their

return, they retained the custom in the Holy Land. The rabbis, indeed, carry back the origin of synagogues even to the patriarchal times; but they assign no reasons worthy of consideration for this opinion. The only passage in the Old Testament where synagogues seem to be mentioned, is Ps. lxxiv. 8, where, according to our translation, we read that the enemies of the Jews “burned up all the synagogues of God in the land.” But according to Prideaux, synagogues are not here meant, but the *proseuchæ*, or oratories; the word literally signifying “the assemblies of God,” that is, the holy places. In the Septuagint the passage is translated, *καταπαύσωμεν τὰς ἐορτὰς Κυρίου ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς*. Other eminent critics conclude that this psalm was not composed until after the exile. James also says, that “from ancient times Moses is read in the synagogues every Sabbath-day” (Acts xv. 21); but to refer these times to the period of the return from the captivity, is a date sufficiently ancient.

In the time of our Lord, synagogues existed in every considerable village in Palestine; and in the cities there were several. Thus, as already mentioned, it is stated that there were 480 synagogues in Jerusalem. The Jews of the dispersion also had their synagogues; and so we are informed that Paul, on his missionary journeys, whenever he arrived at any city, first went to the synagogue, and there taught. When the Jews abroad were not sufficiently numerous to have a synagogue, they had their *proseuchæ* (*προσευχαί*), or places of prayer, which were enclosures, frequently without roofs, outside of the city, and generally in the neighbourhood of a stream, for the sake of their ceremonial ablutions (Acts xvi. 13).

The service of the synagogue consisted in the repetition of set forms of prayer, and in reading lessons out of the law and the prophets. There is still in use an ancient Jewish liturgy of eighteen prayers, which many suppose was employed in the time of our Saviour. The law was divided into fifty-two sections, so that the whole was read during the course of the year. To each section of the law, there was annexed a special portion from the prophets: so that

the lessons for each day were fixed, just as is the case with the service of the Church of England. After the reading of the law and the prophets, a discourse was delivered, generally by one of the elders, or by a person of known character and learning, who was requested to address the congregation. Thus we find that our Lord and Paul were often asked to preach in the synagogues.

Various officers were attached to the synagogue. These were not confined to the sacerdotal class, but might be chosen from the nation at large. At the head of them was the ruler or president of the synagogue (*ἀρχισυνάγωγος*), who had the chief management of all its affairs, and saw that its assemblies were orderly conducted. There were the elders (*πρεσβύτεροι*), called also sometimes rulers (Acts xiii. 15), who appear to have formed a college under the presidency of the chief ruler, to aid him with their advice. There was also an officer called "the angel of the church" (*legatus ecclesiae*), whose duty it was to conduct the devotions of the assembly, being the reader of the prayers. And, lastly, there was the minister (*ὑπηρέτης*, Luke iv. 20), who took charge of the sacred books, attended to the cleansing of the room, and opened and shut the doors. All these officers were solemnly set apart by the imposition of hands. It would also appear that formerly the schools were closely connected with the synagogues, so that the synagogues were not merely places set apart for public worship, but also for instruction, catechizing, and religious disputation; and hence it is that we read that Stephen disputed in the various synagogues. Such also was the frequent practice of Paul.

Synagogues also appear in the apostolic times to have possessed certain judicial functions. They were courts under the jurisdiction of the Sanhedrim; and to them seem to have been committed the trial and punishment of minor offences. Especially they had the oversight of the religion of their members, or perhaps even of the Jewish residents in the district, for among the Palestinian Jews at least there was no such thing as religious toleration: heresy was regarded as a crime. Hence our Saviour warns His disciples that

they would be regarded as apostates from the Jewish religion, and be scourged in the synagogues (Matt. x. 17, xxiii. 34); and Paul says, that when he persecuted the church, he beat in every synagogue those who believed on Christ (Acts xxii. 19, xxvi. 11). The Romans do not seem to have interfered with the Jews in the administration of their laws, at least in Palestine; except that they protected the Jewish Roman citizens, who were forbidden to be scourged; and whilst they permitted the Jews to inflict minor punishments, they wisely deprived them of the power of life and death.

The influence which the synagogue exercised upon the Jewish character was very great. It was this system which preserved them for ever from relapsing into idolatry. Religion was openly taught and impressed upon them; the law and the prophets were read every Sabbath-day: and thus they were led to look with aversion upon the religious systems of their heathen neighbours. A more intellectual form of religion came in the place of the ceremonial. A new class of men arose, who rivalled in influence the sacerdotal class. In the synagogue, the service of the priest and the Levite might be dispensed with: the elder and the scribe occupied their place. Through the synagogues also, it is probable that the Pharisees obtained and exercised their great influence among the people; the scribes and elders in general belonged to that party, whereas the worldly Sadducees were comparatively indifferent to the outward forms of religion. It was the Pharisees who made long prayers standing in the synagogues, and thus obtained the praise of men.—It is an interesting question—the discussion of which, however, would occupy too much space—What influence the synagogue exercised upon Christianity? How far the church, in its service and officers, resembles the Jewish synagogue? How much, if anything, was borrowed by the early Christians from the ecclesiastical polity of the Jews?<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For authorities on the subject of the synagogue, the reader is referred to Prideaux's *Connection of the Old and New Testament*, Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*, Dr. Plumptre's article in Smith's *Biblical Dictionary*, and the article "Synagogen" in Winer's *biblisches Wörterbuch*.



## SECTION XIII.

### THE DEFENCE OF STEPHEN.—ACTS VII. 1-53.

1 And the high priest said, Are then these things so? 2 And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, 3 And said to him, Depart from thy land, and from thy kindred, and come hither into the land which I shall show thee. 4 Then, having gone out of the land of the Chaldeans, he dwelt in Haran; and thence, when his father was dead, He removed him into this land, in which ye now dwell. 5 And He gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot-breadth: and He promised to give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when he had no child. 6 And God spoke on this wise, That his seed should be sojourners in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and oppress them for four hundred years. 7 And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, saith God: and after these things they shall come forth, and worship me in this place. 8 And He gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so he begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob the twelve patriarchs. 9 And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: and God was with him, 10 And delivered him from all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom before Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt, and all his house. 11 But there came a famine over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no food. 12 But when Jacob heard that there was corn, he sent out our fathers first into Egypt. 13 And at the second time Joseph was recognised by his brethren; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh. 14 Then Joseph sent, and called his father Jacob and all his kindred, seventy-five souls. 15 And Jacob went down and died, he and our fathers. 16 And they were removed to Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money from the sons of Emmor, of Sychem. 17 But as the time of the promise drew near, which God had declared to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, 18 Until another king arose, who knew not Joseph: 19 The same dealt with subtlety toward our kindred, and oppressed our fathers, so that they cast out their infants, that they might not be preserved alive. 20 In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, who was

nourished in his father's house three months. 21 And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son. 22 And Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in his words and works. 23 And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel. 24 And seeing one suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, by smiting the Egyptian: 25 For he supposed that his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would give to them deliverance; but they understood not. 26 And the next day he appeared to them as they strove, and urged them to peace, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye injure one another? 27 But he who injured his neighbour thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? 28 Wilt thou kill me, as thou didst kill the Egyptian yesterday? 29 Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Midian, where he begat two sons. 30 And when forty years were fulfilled, there appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, an angel in a flame of fire in a bush. 31 When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came, 32 I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold. 33 But the Lord said to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground. 34 I have distinctly seen the ill-treatment of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and I am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt. 35 This Moses whom they denied, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same has God sent to be a ruler and a redeemer, with the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush. 36 This man brought them out, after that he had wrought wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years. 37 This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel, A prophet will God raise up to you of your brethren, like unto me. 38 This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him in Mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the living words to give to us; 39 To whom our fathers were unwilling to be obedient, but thrust him from them, and in their heart turned back to Egypt, 40 Saying to Aaron, Make us gods who will go before us: for as for this Moses, who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we know not what has happened to him. 41 And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their hands. 42 But God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me sacrifices and offerings for forty years in the wilderness? 43 And ye took up the tabernacle of Molech, and the star of the god Rephan, figures which ye made, to worship them: and I will remove you beyond

Babylon. 44 The tabernacle of witness was with our fathers in the wilderness, as He who spoke to Moses commanded, to make it according to the pattern which he had seen: 45 Which also our fathers having received, brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out from the face of our fathers, until the days of David; 46 Who found favour before God, and requested to find a dwelling for the God of Jacob. 47 But Solomon built Him a house. 48 Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in what are made with hands; as says the prophet, 49 Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord; or what is the place of my rest? 50 Did not my hand make all these things? 51 Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. 52 Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? and they slew those who foretold the coming of the Just One: whose betrayers and murderers ye have now become: 53 Who received the law as ordinances of angels, and did not keep it.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

Ver. 12. *Εἰς Αἴγυπτον* is found in A, B, C, E,  $\kappa$ , and is decidedly to be preferred to *ἐν Αἴγυπτῳ*, found in D, H. Ver. 15. *Εἰς Αἴγυπτον* is cancelled by Tischendorf, though it would seem without sufficient reason. Ver. 16. "O before *ὠνήσατο*, found in H, is to be rejected; and the reading  $\phi$ , found in A, B, C, D, E,  $\kappa$ , to be preferred. Ver. 17. Instead of *ῥμοσεν*, found in H, Tischendorf, Lachmann, and Meyer read *ὡμολόγησεν*, after A, B, C,  $\kappa$ . Ver. 21. The reading of the *textus receptus*, *ἐκτεθέντα δὲ αὐτόν*, found in E, H, is adopted by Tischendorf, Alford, and De Wette; whereas Lachmann reads *ἐκτεθέντος δὲ αὐτοῦ*, certainly a better attested reading, being found in A, B, C, D,  $\kappa$ . Ver. 22. *Αὐτοῦ* after *ἔργοις* is attested by A, B, C, D, E,  $\kappa$ , and is inserted by all the recent critics. Ver. 26. *Συνήλασαν*, the reading of the *textus receptus*, is found in A, E, and is preferred by Tischendorf, Meyer, and De Wette, as the more difficult reading, to *συνήλλασσαν*, although supported by B, C, D, and  $\kappa$ . Ver. 30. Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Alford read *ἄγγελος* without *Κυρίου*, after A, B, C,  $\kappa$ . *Φλογὶ πυρός* of the *textus receptus* is found in B, D, H,  $\kappa$ , and is adopted by Lachmann and Alford;

whereas Tischendorf reads *πυρὶ φλογός*, found in A, C, E. Ver. 31. *Πρὸς αὐτόν* after *Κυρίου*, found in C, is omitted by Tischendorf and Lachmann, being wanting in A, B,  $\aleph$ . Ver. 32. Tischendorf and Lachmann read *ὁ Θεὸς Ἀβραὰμ, καὶ Ἰσαὰκ, καὶ Ἰακώβ*, after A, B, C,  $\aleph$ . Ver. 35. Bornemann, Lachmann, and Tischendorf read *σὺν χειρί*, after A, B, C, D, E, instead of *ἐν χειρί*, found in H and  $\aleph$ . Ver. 37. The shorter reading *ἀναστήσει ὁ Θεός*, after A, B, D,  $\aleph$ , is adopted by Tischendorf, Lachmann, and Alford, instead of the reading of the *textus receptus*, *ἀναστήσει Κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὑμῶν*, found in C, E, H. *Αὐτοῦ ἀκούσεσθε*, found in C, E, is omitted by Tischendorf and Lachmann, being wanting in A, B, H,  $\aleph$ . Ver. 43. *Ῥμῶν* after *θεοῦ* is wanting in B and D, and is omitted by Lachmann and Tischendorf: it is found in A, C, E,  $\aleph$ . The reading *Ῥεφάν*, found in C, E, is adopted by Lachmann and Tischendorf as being the most probable. Ver. 48. *Ναοῖς*, found in H, is rejected by all recent editors, being wanting in A, B, C, D, E,  $\aleph$ . Ver. 52. The reading *ἐγένεσθε*, found in A, B, C, D, E,  $\aleph$ , and adopted by Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Meyer, is decidedly to be preferred to *γεγένησθε* of the *textus receptus*, found in H.

#### EXEGETICAL REMARKS.

Stephen, being accused before the Sanhedrim of blasphemy against the Mosaic religion, and against God, defends himself in the following speech. As to the nature of the speech—its relation to the charges brought against Stephen, and the objects which the protomartyr had in view—see remarks at the close of the exposition.

Ver. 1. *Εἶπεν δὲ ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς*—*But the high priest said*. The glorified countenance of Stephen has caused a pause of surprise and admiration, which the high priest interrupts by calling upon the accused for his defence.

Ver. 2. *Ἄνδρες, ἀδελφοί, καὶ πατέρες*—*Men, brethren, and fathers*. Stephen, addressing the audience, calls them *brethren*; and addressing the members of the Sanhedrim,



calls them *fathers*. 'Ο Θεὸς τῆς δόξης—the *God of glory*. This is not to be considered as a Hebraism equivalent to Θεὸς ἔνδοξος (Humphry); but it refers to the δόξα of the Jews—the glory of God, which, as a pillar of fire, guided them in the wilderness, and rested upon the mercy-seat in the tabernacle and in the temple—called by them the Shekinah. Hence Paul mentions ἡ δόξα as one of the peculiar privileges of the Jewish nation (Rom. ix. 4). 'Εν τῇ Μεσοποταμίᾳ—in *Mesopotamia*. In the Old Testament, the place where Abraham first resided is called Ur of the Chaldees (Gen. xi. 28), and lay to the north of Mesopotamia, near to the sources of the Tigris. 'Εν Χαρράν—in *Haran*. Haran, called here and in the Septuagint Charran, and by the Greeks and Romans Carrhæ, was also situated in the district of Mesopotamia, but to the south of Ur, and on the side bordering on Palestine. It is noted in Roman history as the scene of the defeat of Crassus, B.C. 51: "*Miserando funere Crassus Assyrias Latio maculabit sanguine Carras*" (Lucan, i. 104); *Carras cæde Crassi nobiles* (Plin. v. 24; Strabo, xvi. 1. 23). In the wars of Julian it is mentioned as a Roman city, and in the days of the caliphs it was a place of some consequence. It is still known by its ancient name, and is inhabited by a few wandering Arabs. Niebuhr says that it is two days' journey from Orfa.

Ver. 3. Καὶ εἶπε πρὸς αὐτόν—and *said to him, Depart from thy land, and from thy kindred*. The quotation is taken verbatim from the Septuagint of Gen. xii. 1, except that the words καὶ ἐκ τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ πατρὸς σου, and *from the house of thy father*, are here omitted. There is here an apparent discrepancy between the statement of Stephen and the Mosaic narrative. According to Stephen, the call of Abraham took place in Ur of the Chaldees before he dwelt in Haran; whereas, according to Moses, the call occurred in Haran. Accordingly many critics (Grotius, De Wette, Meyer) think that Stephen has here committed a mistake, and followed an erroneous tradition of the Jews. But the discrepancy is only apparent. It would appear from the sacred narrative that Abraham was twice called: once in Ur of the Chaldees,

and afterwards at Haran. His removal from Ur, we are expressly informed, was in consequence of a divine revelation: "I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it" (Gen. xv. 7). And in the book of Nehemiah there is a reference to this early call: "Thou art the Lord, the God who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees" (Neh. ix. 7). Josephus mentions this earlier call of Abraham in Chaldea, but he omits entirely the sojourn in Haran (*Ant.* i. 7. 1). To this solution of the difficulty, Meyer objects that the verbal quotation from Gen. xii. 1 proves that Stephen had in view no other call than that mentioned in this passage. But, on the one hand, it is not surprising either that the call should be repeated to Abraham in nearly the same words, or that Stephen should apply the well-known words found in Gen. xii. 1 to the earlier call. And, on the other hand, the words are not precisely the same; for here there is no mention of a departure from his father's house, as there is when God called Abraham at Haran. When Abraham removed from Ur of the Chaldees, he did not depart from his father's house, for Terah his father accompanied him; but when he removed from Haran, he left Terah (if he was then alive) and his brother Nahor.

Ver. 4. *Μετὰ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ*—*after his father was dead.* Here there is another variation from the Mosaic narrative. In Gen. xi. 26 we read that Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and in Gen. xi. 32 we are informed that the days of Terah were two hundred and five years. Now Abraham was seventy-five when he removed from Haran (Gen. xii. 4); and therefore it would follow that Terah, so far from being dead, lived sixty years after the departure of Abraham ( $70 + 75 + 60 = 205$ ). There was a tradition of the Jews, that Abraham, actuated by filial piety, remained in Haran until the death of his father. Philo, in his *Life of Abraham*, also mentions the death of Terah as occurring before the removal of Abraham (*De migr. Abrah.* 32); and hence many suppose that Stephen here followed a rabbinical tradition, though erro-

neous (Meyer, De Wette, Lechler, Alford). Bengel supposes, that while Terah lived in Haran, Abraham had his paternal home there, and only lived as a stranger in the land of Canaan; but such a solution of the difficulty is forced and unnatural. Baumgarten asserts, that although Terah yet lived when Abraham went into Canaan, yet Stephen thought it necessary to mention his death, for the purpose of showing, that for the commencement of the new relation which God designed to form with the human race, Abraham was to be taken into consideration, not as associated, but as separate from Terah,—an explanation which is unsatisfactory and mystical. Many critics (Michaelis, Kuinœl, Lûger, Olshausen, Stier) suppose that Stephen here adopts the Jewish notion, that Abraham left Haran after the spiritual death of Terah, that is, after his apostasy into idolatry. According to this view, ἀποθανεῖν must signify spiritual death,—a sense which is not justified by the context, and which would never have been adopted had not this apparent discrepancy occurred. The Samaritan Pentateuch reads one hundred and forty-five years as the age of Terah,—a reading which has been adopted by Bochart and Whiston. If correct, it is a complete solution of the difficulty; for then Terah would be dead before Abraham left Haran. The most probable explanation is, that Abraham was the youngest son of Terah, and was not born until Terah was a hundred and thirty years old (Lange, Lightfoot, Hackett, Biscoe, Wordsworth). It is indeed said that Terah was seventy years old when he begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; but by this may be only meant, that he was that age when his first child was born; and Abraham may be mentioned first, not because he was the oldest, but because he was the most distinguished. Lightfoot has shown that some Jewish writers assert that, although first mentioned, Abraham was the youngest of the brethren; and they illustrate this from the order observed in numbering the sons of Noah, where Shem is first in the catalogue, though he was younger than Japhet. The great number of years (sixty) between the birth of the oldest and of the youngest son of Terah on this supposition

is, it must be admitted, an objection to this solution of the difficulty; but, considering the ages of the patriarchs, it cannot be asserted to be insurmountable.<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 5. *Καὶ οὐκ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ κληρονομίαν ἐν αὐτῇ*—*and He gave him no inheritance in it.* Here a third apparent contradiction to the Mosaic narrative occurs. According to Stephen, Abraham had no inheritance in Canaan, not even a foot-breadth; whereas, according to the Mosaic narrative, he purchased the field and cave of Machpelah at Hebron (Gen. xxiii. 20). Various explanations have been given. Meyer supposes that the statement of Stephen refers only to the first period of Abraham's residence in Canaan, before the institution of circumcision; whereas that field was purchased toward the close of his life. Kuinœl and Olshausen think that *οὐκ* here stands for *οὐπω*, *not yet*. Bengel and Lechler find the solution of the difficulty in this, that Abraham had to purchase the field, and did not receive it as a gift from God. But, after all, what is the use of all these attempts at reconciliation? Surely a burying-place cannot be called an inheritance. Although the whole land of Canaan was given by promise to Abraham, and to his seed after him, yet he could only find in it a grave for himself and family.

Vers. 6, 7. These verses are a quotation, with a few variations, from the Septuagint of Gen. xv. 13, 14. The last words, *λατρευσού μοι ἐν τῷ τόπῳ τούτῳ*, are taken from Ex. iii. 12, where, however, *τόπῳ* is substituted for *ὄρει*. By the words "in this place," are meant the land of Canaan; whereas, in the book of Exodus, "in this mountain" refers to Sinai. The words are a permissible application of the language of the Mosaic narrative, by which the promise that the Israelites would worship God in Sinai is transferred to their worship in the Holy Land; and it is hypercriticism to affirm that here there is another mistake committed by Stephen. Such applications of the prophecies of the Old Testament are frequently made by the sacred writers.

*Ἔτη τετρακόσια*—*four hundred years.* This is the number

<sup>1</sup> See especially, on this difficulty, Biscoe *on the Acts*, pp. 545, 546.



in the passage of which these words are a quotation, according to the text both of the Hebrew and of the Septuagint (Gen. xvi. 13). The exact number of years, as we elsewhere learn, was four hundred and thirty (Ex. xii. 40; see also Gal. iii. 17). A round sum is here given, without taking into account the broken number. But the question is, From what period are these years to be reckoned? Do they refer exclusively to the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt, commencing at the removal of Jacob into that country? Or do they commence from the call of Abraham, and include also the sojourn in Canaan? Certainly, at first sight, the words in the Mosaic narrative would seem to intimate that this was the period of Egyptian bondage; but Paul understands it differently. He reckons four hundred and thirty years as extending from the call of Abraham to the giving of the law (Gal. iii. 17). And there are internal marks in the Mosaic narrative which show that this reckoning is correct; for the mother of Moses was the daughter of Levi (Ex. vi. 20), which would be impossible were the whole period of Egyptian bondage four hundred and thirty years.<sup>1</sup> The period of four hundred and thirty years appears to be divided into two equal parts, the one being the sojourn in Canaan, and the other being the sojourn in Egypt. The former period is thus reckoned: From the call of Abraham to the birth of Isaac, twenty-five years; from the birth of Isaac to the birth of Jacob, sixty years; from the birth of Jacob to his removal to Egypt, a hundred and thirty years (Gen. xlvii. 9):  $25 + 60 + 130 = 215$ . And the latter period may be thus accounted for: From Jacob's removal to Egypt to the death of Joseph, seventy-one years; from the death of Joseph to the birth of Moses, sixty-four years; from the birth of Moses to the exodus, eighty years:  $71 + 64 + 80 = 215$ . Josephus is not consistent with himself. In one place he says that the Israelites spent four hundred years under the afflictions in Egypt (*Ant.* ii. 9. 1), and in another place he states that the children of Israel left Egypt four hundred and thirty years

<sup>1</sup> See a valuable note by Alford on Gal. iii. 17; and also Wordsworth on the Acts, p. 67.

after Abraham came into Canaan, but two hundred and fifteen years only after Jacob removed into Egypt (*Ant.* ii. 15. 2).

Ver. 8. *Διαθήκην περιτομῆς*—*the covenant of circumcision*. Circumcision was the sign or seal of the covenant which God made with Abraham, that He would give to him and to his seed the land of Canaan for a possession; so that, fully expressed, the idea is: He gave to him circumcision, the seal of the covenant. Circumcision, however, is called in the Old Testament, as here, the covenant (Gen. xvii. 10, 11); the sign being called by the name of the thing signified.

Ver. 9. *Καὶ οἱ πατριάρχαι*—*and the patriarchs*. The twelve sons of Jacob are here honoured by the name patriarchs, as being the heads of the twelve tribes or *πατριάι*. *Ζηλώσαντες, τὸν Ἰωσήφ ἀπέδοντο*—*moved with envy, sold Joseph*. Without doubt, Stephen, in mentioning the envious jealousy of the patriarchs toward Joseph, had in view the wicked disposition of the Jewish rulers toward Jesus. There is here, as well as in the mention of the rejection of Moses, an indirect attack upon his accusers: that they, in rejecting Jesus and persecuting His disciples, were just acting over again the conduct of their forefathers.

Ver. 10. *Καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ χάριν*—*and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh*. By this we are not to understand favour in the sight of God, and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh (Meyer). Both favour and wisdom have reference to the view of the king. Joseph, by displaying his wisdom as an interpreter of dreams, obtained favour with Pharaoh, so much so that he constituted him his vizier. Pharaoh appears to have been the common title of the Egyptian kings, as Ptolemy was in after ages, and as Cæsar was the title of the Roman emperors.

Vers. 11–13. *Χορτάσματα*—*food*; literally fodder, a deficiency in which was the greatest want for a pastoral people like the Israelites. *Ὅντα σιτία*—*that there was corn*. Where, is not said, but Egypt is supposed. Egypt was the great corn country of the ancient world; it was the granary of the Roman empire. *Εἰς Αἴγυπτον*—*into Egypt*. These words

are not connected with *σιτία*, as in our version, but with *ἐξαπέστειλε*, as is evident from the preposition *εἰς*. (See critical note.) *Πρῶτον*—*first*, *i.e.* before going himself. *Τὸ γένος Ἰωσήφ*—*the kindred of Joseph was made known to Pharaoh*; not that Pharaoh now learned for the first time the Hebrew origin of Joseph, but merely that he was informed of the arrival of his kindred in Egypt.

Ver. 14. *Ψυχαῖς ἐβδομηκονταπέντε*—*seventy-five souls*. The readings of the Hebrew and the Septuagint here differ. According to the Hebrew text, the descendants of Jacob amounted only to seventy (Gen. xli. 27; Ex. i. 5; Deut. x. 22), and the same number is given by Josephus (*Ant.* ii. 7. 4); whereas according to the Septuagint (Gen. xli. 27 and Ex. i. 5, but not in Deut. x. 22) the number is seventy-five. According to the Hebrew, the descendants of Jacob who came into Egypt were sixty-six; and Jacob himself, Joseph and his two sons, made up the seventy: whereas in the Septuagint, after giving the number sixty-six, it is added, "And the sons of Joseph born unto him in the land of Egypt were nine souls; so all the souls of the house of Jacob who came into Egypt were seventy-five" (Gen. xli. 26, 27). By the nine sons of Joseph are probably meant his two sons and their five children and grandchildren (Gen. xli. 20, according to the LXX.), and reckoning Jacob and Joseph themselves to make up the number (Alford). Various attempts have been made to reconcile the statement of Stephen with the Hebrew account. It has been supposed that in the Hebrew those only are mentioned who were descended from Jacob—his sons and grandsons; whereas Stephen mentions those who came down with him into Egypt, including the wives of the patriarchs, and excluding Joseph and his two sons, who were already in Egypt. But such an explanation is unsatisfactory. Stephen, in giving the number at seventy-five, just follows the Septuagint, the translation which he, as a Hellenist, used; and according to it, the number is made up by adding the five descendants of Joseph.<sup>1</sup>

Vers. 15, 16. These verses contain the greatest apparent

<sup>1</sup> See Wordsworth on the Acts, p. 68.

discrepancies which exist between the speech of Stephen and the Mosaic narrative. There are three variations: 1. According to Stephen, it would appear that Jacob was buried in Shechem; whereas according to the Mosaic account he was buried with Abraham and Isaac at Hebron. 2. According to Stephen, the twelve patriarchs were buried at Shechem; whereas according to the Mosaic narrative this was indeed true of Joseph, but there is no mention of the rest of the patriarchs. (This, however, can hardly be called a discrepancy, as there is here no statement of Moses at variance with the words of Stephen.) 3. According to Stephen, it would seem that the field of Shechem was purchased by Abraham of the sons of Emmor, the father of Shechem; whereas according to the Mosaic account this purchase was made by Jacob (Gen. xxxiii. 19),—the purchase of Abraham being the cave of Machpelah at Hebron from Ephron the Hittite (Gen. xxiii. 20).

With regard to the first and second variations, the difficulty consists in this, that Stephen appears to state that Jacob and the twelve patriarchs were buried in Shechem; whereas according to the Mosaic narrative Jacob was buried at Hebron, and it is mentioned of Joseph only that his bones were buried in Shechem: "The bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem" (Josh. xxiv. 32). There is no mention in the Old Testament of the burial-place of the other patriarchs; and, according to Lightfoot, all Jewish writers are wholly silent with regard to their burial in Shechem. According to Josephus, their bodies were buried at Hebron (*Ant.* ii. 8. 2). Christian tradition, however, fixes on Shechem as their place of sepulture. Thus Jerome, who himself lived in the neighbourhood of that city, giving a description of the travels of Paula through the Holy Land, says: "She came to Shechem, and passing thence, she saw the sepulchres of the twelve patriarchs" (*Ep.* 86). And it is not improbable, that with the bones of Joseph, the Israelites buried also the bones of the other patriarchs at Shechem



This, however, does not solve the difficulty with regard to the burial of Jacob ; and on this point most commentators consider that Stephen was mistaken (De Wette, Meyer, Alford, Lange). But if we suppose that οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν only, without αὐτός, is the nominative to μετετέθησαν, then the difficulty is removed ; and this is a construction which is approved of by critics of the highest order (Kuinoël, Olshausen, Hackett, Wordsworth), a certain allowance being made for a loose construction. The passage would then read as follows : “ And Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he and our fathers. And they (our fathers) were removed to Sychem.”

The third variation creates a more serious difficulty, as there is, according to the present reading, an evident contradiction. According to Stephen, Abraham purchased the sepulchre at Shechem from the sons of Emmor, the father of Shechem ; but according to the Mosaic account, not Abraham, but Jacob, purchased this field (Gen. xxxiii. 19 ; Josh. xxiv. 32). Abraham, on the contrary, purchased the cave at Hebron from Ephron the Hittite (Gen. xxiii. 16, xlix. 29). Hence it would appear that Stephen has confounded the two purchases of Abraham and Jacob. Most critics have given up the attempt at reconciliation as hopeless, and have admitted that Stephen, in the excitement of the moment, fell into a mistake, and that Luke, or the editor of the speech, did not feel himself justified in correcting it (De Wette, Meyer, Olshausen, Lechler, Alford, Humphry). Some (Hammond, Krebs) would explain Ἀβραάμ as a patronymic in the sense of Abrahamides—that is, Jacob ; but such an explanation is arbitrary, and evidently erroneous. Others (Biscoe, Bengel, Lüger, Stier) suppose that Stephen, for the sake of brevity, unites the two transactions ; and they thus paraphrase the passage : “ Jacob died, he and our fathers ; and they were removed to Shechem (and to the sepulchre of Hebron) : and they were laid (in the parcel of ground at Shechem, and) in the sepulchre (of Hebron) which Abraham (and Jacob) had bought for a sum of money from (Ephron the Hittite, and) from the sons of Emmor, the

father of Shechem." But this, so far from removing the difficulty, makes the discrepancy only the more apparent. In short, all solutions of the difficulty as the text now stands are inadmissible:<sup>1</sup> as Calvin observes, "It is plain that a mistake has been made in the name of Abraham; this passage must be corrected." Accordingly various critical emendations have been suggested. Some (Beza, Bochart, Kuinœl, Whitby, Hackett) suppose that the word Ἀβραάμ is spurious, and that the verb ὠνήσατο stood by itself: so that the passage is to be rendered, "and laid in the sepulchre which one purchased;" and that some of the earliest transcribers, seeing the verb without a nominative, supplied Ἀβραάμ. The solution is plausible. It is, however, a mere conjectural emendation, the authority of all MSS. and versions being against its adoption. If an error has entered into the text, it must have been committed by one of the earliest copyists. If conjectural emendation is ever admissible, this is certainly a passage where its exercise would be justifiable, considering the evident nature of the error, and the improbability that it was committed by Stephen, a man full of wisdom and of the Holy Ghost; and that, if committed, it was passed over without correction by the sacred historian.

Ver. 13. Βασιλεὺς ἕτερος—*another king*: not merely the successor of the last king, but another kind (ἕτερος) of king—the king of another dynasty (Ex. i. 8). "The crown being now come into another family" (Joseph. *Ant.* ii. 9. 1). According to Sir G. Wilkinson, this new king was Amosis or Ames, the first of the eighteenth dynasty, or that of the Diospolitans from Thebes. "Ὁς οὐκ ᾔδει τὸν Ἰωσήφ—who knew not Joseph: that is, say some, who did not recognise the merits of Joseph (Kuinœl, Olshausen); or, according to others, who was entirely ignorant of his history and services to the land (Meyer, Lechler). The lapse of sixty years after the death of Joseph, taken in connection with the com-

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Wordsworth, in a long note, attempts to show that Abraham first purchased the field at Shechem, and that it was afterwards recovered by Jacob. This, however, appears to be an unnatural solution.

mencement of a new dynasty, sufficiently accounts for this ignorance of Joseph.

Ver. 19. Τοῦ ποιεῖν τὰ βρέφη ἔκθετα αὐτῶν—*so that they cast out their children*. Meyer thinks that we have here the construction of the infinitive of purpose: he oppressed them in order to make them so desperate as to destroy their own children. But such a meaning does not suit the context, and is grammatically unnecessary. In Hellenistic Greek the indication of the purpose is often changed into that of the result (see Winer's *Grammar*, p. 347, English translation). The reference is to the command of Pharaoh, given to the Egyptians, that they should cast out all the male infants of the Israelites into the Nile.

Ver. 20. Ἀστειὸς τῷ Θεῷ—*exceeding fair*; literally, “fair toward God,” “beautiful in the judgment of God” (Winer, p. 262). The words, however, are to be regarded as a common Hebraism for the superlative of intensity, and the translation of our version is to be retained. Thus Nineveh is called in the Septuagint πόλις μεγάλη τῷ Θεῷ (Jonah iii. 11). So that the sense corresponds with the Mosaic narrative, where it is said of Moses that he was a goodly child (Ex. ii. 2). In Josephus Moses is called παῖδα μορφῇ θεῖον (*Ant.* ii. 9. 7). There are many Jewish traditions which extol the beauty of Moses. Thus, Josephus informs us that none was so indifferent a spectator of beauty that he would not admire the beauty of Moses; and that those who met him as he was carried along the streets not only looked at the countenance of the child, but also, forgetting other business, stood still a great while to gaze upon him: for such was the child's beauty, that it captivated and detained the beholders (*Ant.* ii. 9. 6).

Ver. 21. Ἡ θυγάτηρ Φαραώ—the daughter of Pharaoh, called by Josephus and others Thermutis (*Ant.* ii. 9. 5). Ἀνέλετο αὐτὸν—took him up; not adopted him, but lifted him out of the water. Καὶ ἀνεθρέψατο αὐτὸν ἐαυτῇ εἰς υἱόν—and nourished him for her own son; that is, he became by adoption the son of Pharaoh's daughter: and the privileges of adoption in oriental countries are much greater than they

are in our country. According to the Egyptian law, Moses would probably be regarded as the real son of Pharaoh's daughter. According to Jewish tradition, Moses was chosen as Pharaoh's successor.

Ver. 22. *Καὶ ἐπαιδεύθη Μ. . . . Αἰγυπτίων*—*And Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.* The Egyptians were at this period the most learned people in the world. Their learning, we are informed, embraced natural science, astronomy, and mathematics. "Moses," says Augustine, "took the wisdom of the Egyptians, as the people did the golden vessels." But it is false to imagine that Moses, as the founder of the Jewish religion, was indebted for his religious opinions to his Egyptian training. There is no resemblance between the pure monotheism of the Hebrews and the low fetichism of the Egyptians. *Δυνατὸς ἐν λόγοις*—*mighty in words.* In the Old Testament it is said of Moses that he was slow of speech, and of a slow tongue (Ex. iv. 10). In our passage it is affirmed that his words were weighty—that they were accompanied with power; and indeed it frequently happens that a powerful intellect is combined with a want of fluency in utterance. According to Josephus, "Moses was very able to persuade the people by his speeches" (*Ant.* iii. 1. 4). *Καὶ ἔργοις αὐτοῦ*—*and in his works.* This does not refer to his miracles wrought in Egypt and in the wilderness, but to the works performed in the early part of his life. We have no account of these in the Old Testament. On this period of his life sacred history is entirely silent. Josephus mentions that, when the Ethiopians invaded Egypt, Moses at the head of an army defeated them (*Ant.* ii. 10. 1).

Ver. 23. *Ὡς δὲ ἐπληροῦτο αὐτῷ τεσσαρακονταετῆς χρόνος*—*and when he was full forty years old.* Stephen, according to a Jewish tradition, divides the age of Moses into three periods of forty years: forty years in Egypt (ver. 23); forty years in Midian (ver. 30); forty years in the wilderness (ver. 42). So in Bereschith Rabba it is said: *Moses in palatio Pharaonis 40 annos degit, in Midiane 40 annos, et 40 annos Israeli ministravit.* There are some traces of this division in the Old Testament. The whole age of Moses is stated at 120 years



(Deut. xxxiv. 7), the period spent in the wilderness at forty years (Ex. xvi. 32), and his age when he stood before Pharaoh at eighty years (Ex. vii. 7). There is, however, no mention either of the time he spent in Egypt before his flight to Midian, or of the duration of his residence in that country.

Ver. 24. Ἐποίησεν ἐκδίκησιν τῷ καταπονομένῳ—*avenged him that was oppressed*. Moses felt impelled to be the deliverer of Israel, the avenger of the wrongs of his brethren. Παράξας τὸν Αἰγύπτιον—*having smitten the Egyptian*. In the preceding part of the verse it was not mentioned that it was an Egyptian who was the oppressor; but this is explained by the circumstance that the story was universally known.

Ver. 25. Ἐνόμιζε δὲ συνιέναι—*for he supposed that his brethren would have understood*. Stephen understood this act of Moses, by which he delivered an individual Israelite and slew an individual Egyptian, as an intimation of that national deliverance from Egyptian bondage which God would effect by his means (Lechler). Moses supposed that his brethren would have understood this, and would have readily acknowledged him as their deliverer. We are not informed on what grounds Moses founded his supposition. Probably he had before this divine intimations that he was the destined deliverer of Israel. The approach of the period of the promised deliverance should have prepared the Israelites to expect it; and the appearance of such an illustrious person as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter to be their defender, should have induced them at least to investigate his claims.

Vers. 26–28. Ὁφθῇ—*appeared, i.e. showed himself to them*; appeared not of his own accord, but as the messenger of God. Συνήλασεν αὐτοὺς εἰς εἰρήνην—*urged them to peace*. The verb signifies that he used efforts to reconcile them; literally, “he drove them together into peace.” Μὴ ἀνελεῖν με σὺ θέλεις, etc.—*Wilt thou kill me, as thou didst kill the Egyptian?* It is plain that the speech of this individual is represented as expressing the sentiments of the whole body of the people—the feeling of Israel toward Moses. (See ver. 35.)

Ver. 29. *Ἐν γῇ Μαδιάμ*—*in the land of Midian*. Midian was a district of Arabia Petræa lying along the eastern branch of the Red Sea, or the Elanitic Gulf, bordering on the country of Moab on the one side, and the wilderness of Sinai on the other. There is mention, in the travels of the middle ages, of the ruins of a city Madian, on the east side of the Elanitic Gulf. Probably the Midianites under Jethro were a nomadic tribe, as we do not find them in this district when the Israelites encamped at Mount Sinai.

Ver. 30. *Ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ τοῦ ὄρους Σινᾶ*—*in the wilderness of Mount Sinai*. The Sinaitic peninsula is here indicated as the place where the call of Moses occurred: it was in the neighbourhood of Mount Sinai. In the New Testament and Josephus, Sinai only occurs, and not Horeb; whereas in the Pentateuch both names appear to be used indiscriminately. According to Robinson, Horeb is the general name for the whole mountain range, and Sinai is the name of the particular mountain from which the law was given. *Ἄγγελος*—*an angel*. It is generally admitted by recent critics that this is the correct reading, and not ἄγγελος Κυρίου, as in the *textus receptus*. Commentators are almost equally divided as to whether this was a created angel or the Jehovah Angel—the Messenger of the Covenant—the Son of God (Isa. lxiii. 9). Meyer, Baumgarten, and Lechler think that a created being is here meant; whereas Bengel, Nitzsch, Lange, Stier, Hengstenberg, Wordsworth, and Alford identify the angel with God, as the Jehovah Angel. The Mosaic narrative is in favour of the latter view. The Angel of the bush who guided the Israelites in the wilderness, is in the Old Testament frequently identified with God; and here He appropriates to Himself the titles of the Supreme Being: for, speaking out of the bush, He says: “I am the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob” (see Mark xii. 26). *Ἐν πυρὶ φλογός*—*in a flame of fire*. The flaming fire was a supernatural light belonging to the glory of God. All attempts to explain it by natural causes—as a meteor, lightning, etc.—are unavailing. The heathen in their mythologies mention similar appearances. The Persians relate a similar story concerning their

lawgiver Zoroaster: that, as he was leading a solitary life in a mountain, he one day found it on fire, and approached it without danger, and sacrificed to God.

Vers. 31–33. *Φωνὴ Κυρίου*—*the voice of the Lord, i.e. the voice of the Jehovah Angel*; for we do not think that these words can be explained by saying that the voice of God's messenger is equivalent to the voice of God (Meyer). *Ἀὔσου τὸ ὑπόδημα τῶν ποδῶν σου*—*put off thy shoes from thy feet*. The holiness of God's presence, according to the custom of the East, required that Moses should be without shoes as a symbol of reverence. The priests in the temple, we are informed, performed their ministry without shoes. So also in the present day, the Arabs take off their shoes before entering their mosques (Alford). The probable reason of the custom was, lest the dust which was on their sandals should defile the holy place.

Ver. 34. *Ἰδὼν εἶδον*—*I have distinctly seen*; literally, *seeing I have seen*: a Hebraism, though a similar construction sometimes occurs among the Greek classics (see Winer's *Grammar*, p. 371).

Ver. 35. *Τοῦτον τὸν Μωϋσῆν*—*this Moses*. The frequent repetition of the pronouns (*τοῦτον, οὗτος, ὅς*) in the following verses (vers. 35–38) imparts additional emphasis to the discourse—*this Moses, and none other*. *Ὅν ἡρνήσαντο*—*whom they denied*: the plural used designedly, because the voice of one Israelite was the disposition of the whole nation. *Ἀρχοντα καὶ λυτρωτήν*—*a ruler and a redeemer*. There is here, first, a contrast between the judgment of men and the deed of God: him whom they denied to be a ruler and a judge, God sent as a ruler and a redeemer. Secondly, there is a climax expressed in these words: the Israelites rejected Moses as a *δικαστῆς*, a judge—one who decides private matters; God sent him as a *λυτρωτής*, a redeemer of the whole nation. *Λυτρωτήν*—*a redeemer*. The word is frequently employed in the Septuagint, but does not again occur in the New Testament; the usual word to express the same idea being *σωτήρ*.

Vers. 36, 37. *Οὗτος*, emphatic—*this man*. The terms of

high respect in which Stephen here speaks of Moses tended to prove how false was the accusation that he was guilty of blaspheming him. With the same design of magnifying Moses, he brings forward the celebrated Messianic prophecy, in which Moses represents himself as the type of the Messiah. The words are a free citation from the Septuagint of Deut. xviii. 15. The passage was already quoted by Peter in his address to the Jews. (See note on Acts iii. 22.)

Ver. 38. *Μετὰ τοῦ ἀγγέλου, καὶ τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν*—*with the angel, and with our fathers*. Moses is thus represented as a mediator between the angel who conducted Israel through the wilderness, and the people: he intervened between them. Paul expressly calls him *μεσίτης*, *mediator* (Gal. iii. 19, 20). In this respect Moses was a remarkable type of Christ; and doubtless Stephen had this in view in insisting so much upon the rejection of Moses by the people. *Λόγια ζῶντα*—*living words*: not to be translated *life-giving* (Beza, Grotius, Kuinoel), for then the word would be *ζωοποιούντα*. Words which were not dead, but living, operating with divine power: proving themselves to be living, both by imparting life to those who obeyed them, and by killing those who disobeyed them.

Ver. 39. *Ἐστράφησαν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτῶν*—*in their heart turned back to Egypt*. This does not mean that they wished to return to Egypt; for this does not correspond with the historical narrative. At this time the Israelites expressed no wish to return to Egypt: on the contrary, the memory of their recent hardships in that country made them thankful for their deliverance. Afterwards, indeed, when the memory of these hardships faded, they desired to make a captain, and to return to Egypt (Num. xiv. 4). The meaning, then, is either that they longed after the good things of Egypt (Num. xi. 5); or perhaps rather, as appears from the context, that they apostatized in heart to the gods of Egypt. So Meyer, Stier, Alford, Humphry. It is improbable that a nation so disposed to idolatry as the Israelites would have resided so long in such an idolatrous country as Egypt without being contaminated with its superstitions. It would



appear from a statement of Ezekiel, that they had been addicted to the worship of the idols of Egypt whilst they lived in that country (Ezek. xx. 7).

Ver. 40. *Οἱ προπορεύσονται ἡμῶν*—*who will go before us*: not, who will go before us in our return to Egypt; but, who will conduct us as Moses did to the promised land. *Ὁ γὰρ Μωϋσῆς οὗτος*—*for this Moses*. The nominative absolute stands first, to render the whole sentence emphatic. *Οὐκ οἶδαμεν τί γέγονεν αὐτῷ*—*we know not what has become of him*. The allusion is to his stay of forty days on the top of Mount Sinai. The whole verse is taken verbatim from the Septuagint of Ex. xxxii. 1, except that the words *ὁ ἄνθρωπος* after *οὗτος* are omitted.

Ver. 41. *Ἐμοσχοποίησαν*—*they made a calf*: a word found nowhere else. In the Septuagint the equivalent expression is *ἐποίησαν μόσχον*. The Israelites appear to have intended this calf to be the image or emblem, not of any Egyptian god, but of Jehovah, who had delivered them from Egypt. Aaron, on the occasion of this worship, proclaimed a feast to the Lord (Ex. xxxii. 4). “They changed,” says the Psalmist, “the glory of God into the image of an ox which eateth grass” (Ps. cvi. 20). See also Neh. ix. 18. So that their sin, strictly considered, consisted in the violation of the second commandment—worshipping God through the medium of a graven image. It is certain, however, that this species of idolatry was borrowed from Egypt. There the ox was worshipped both at Memphis under the name Apis, and at Heliopolis under the name Mnevis: at both places divine homage was paid to living bulls. The common opinion is, that the golden calf was an imitation of Apis, but Ewald supposes that it was Mnevis; and this opinion is advocated by Sir George Wilkinson, who observes: “The offerings, dancings, and rejoicings practised on that occasion were doubtless in imitation of a ceremony they had witnessed in honour of Mnevis.” Calf-worship was afterwards established by Jeroboam in the kingdom of Israel, and appears to have continued so long as that kingdom endured. Here also it is evident that Jeroboam did not wish to introduce

the worship of new gods, but that he regarded the calves as emblems of the true God; for he introduced his worship with the same proclamation which Aaron made to the Israelites (1 Kings xii. 28).

Ver. 42. *Ἔστρεψε δὲ ὁ Θεὸς*—*but God turned*—withdrew Himself from them, thus showing His manifest displeasure at their iniquity. *Τῇ στρατιᾷ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ*—*the host of heaven*. That to which God gave them up as a judgment was star-worship (Sabeanism), which appears to have been the earliest form of idolatry (Job xxxi. 26), and which was native to Chaldea. As animal-worship was the prevalent form of Egyptian idolatry, so was star-worship the prevalent Chaldean form. *Ἐν βίβλῳ τῶν προφητῶν*—*in the book of the prophets*; that is, of the twelve minor prophets, whose prophecies among the Jews formed one book.

Vers. 42, 43. A quotation, with a few trivial alterations, from the Septuagint of Amos v. 25–27, except that here *Βαβυλῶνος* is substituted for *Δαμασκοῦ* (see below). There is, however, a difference between the Septuagint and the Hebrew. In our version it is, “Ye have borne the tabernacle of your Molech and Chiun, your images” (Amos v. 26). Many Hebrew scholars (Bengel, De Wette, Hengstenberg), however, suppose that Molech and Chiun are not proper names, but appellatives; and that the clause should have been translated, “Ye have borne the tabernacle of your king (Molech), and the support or framework (Chiun) of your images.” Other authorities defend the translation given in our version. The Septuagint evidently regarded the words as proper names: it, however, substitutes the word Rephan for Chiun. Rephan is a Coptic word, and is supposed to be the Egyptian equivalent for Chiun, an Arabic word, and both denoting the god Saturn.

*Μὴ σφάγια καὶ θυσίας προσηνέγκατέ*, etc.—*Have ye offered to me sacrifices and offerings for forty years in the wilderness?* The question thus put by God through the prophet evidently supposes a negative answer: that the Israelites had not offered sacrifices and offerings to God during the forty years in the wilderness. The apparent contradiction between this

statement and the accounts of the sacrifices in the Mosaic narrative is easily removed, by taking the words rhetorically. Their idolatrous disposition rendered nugatory all the sacrifices which they offered to God: it vitiated their worship: it was as if they had never sacrificed to Him. Hence there is no reason, with Olshausen and Kuinoël, to explain *μοι* as equivalent to *ἐμοὶ μόνῳ*, or to suppose that the prophet alludes not to their legal, but to their voluntary sacrifices. *Τὴν σκηνὴν τοῦ Μολόχ*—*the tabernacle of Molech*. Molech was the tutelar god of the Ammonites (1 Kings xi. 7). He is supposed by some to have been the Phœnician Saturn, and by others to have been the Sun, or the Tyrian Baal. If Molech and Rephan are different idols, the latter opinion is the more correct, it being now generally agreed that Rephan is the Egyptian name for Saturn. The worship, however, of the god Molech is similar to that which was paid to Saturn. According to rabbinical tradition, the image of Molech was a hollow figure, with the head of an ox and outstretched arms. A fire was kindled below, and a child was put into its arms, and was thus burned to death. The priests beat their drums in order to stifle the cries of the child, and hence the image was called Tophet (*tophim*, drums). Now this is precisely similar to the description of the worship of Saturn among the Carthaginians, given us by Diodorus Siculus. "They had," he says, "an image of Saturn made of brass, stretching out his hands, extended towards the earth; so that a child being put into them, fell into a great gulf of fire." The worship of Molech was prevalent among the Jews after their establishment in Canaan. Solomon, we are informed, erected a high place to Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon (1 Kings xi. 7); and from his time, with some intermissions, until the extinction of the kingdom of Judah in the reign of Zedekiah, the abominable rites of Molech were practised (Jer. xxxii. 35). By the tabernacle or tent of Molech is probably meant a portable tent, wherein the statue of the god was placed. Diodorus Siculus mentions the *ἱερὰ σκηνή* in the camp of the Carthaginians. *Τὸ ἄστρον τοῦ θεοῦ Ῥεφάν*—*the star of the*

*god Rephan.* Rephan is the translation in the Septuagint of the Hebrew Chiun. He is generally supposed to be the same as Saturn. According to Kircher, Rephan is a Coptic word, and answers to the planet Saturn, and Chiun is the Arabic term for the same planet; and as the translators were Egyptian Jews, they gave to the Hebrew word its Coptic equivalent (see Winer's *Wörterbuch*, Saturn). Some suppose that Molech and Rephan are names for the same idol, and that both denote the god Saturn; and certainly the peculiar worship of Molech favours this supposition: they, however, appear to be distinguished in the text. Ἐπέκεινα Βαβυλώνος—*beyond Babylon*. Here the words differ from the Septuagint, where we read ἐπέκεινα Δαμασκού—*beyond Damascus*; with which also the Hebrew agrees. The fulfilment of the prophecy in the well-known Babylonish captivity, made it natural and permissible to substitute Babylon for Damascus.

There is a difference of opinion with regard to the time when this idolatry took place: whether it was in the wilderness or after the establishment of Israel in the promised land. There is no mention elsewhere of the god Rephan or Chiun; but the worship of Molech was prevalent in the kingdom of Judah. Some accordingly suppose that it is these idolatries which are referred to. But the words of the prophet appear rather to refer to the idolatries practised during the forty years in the wilderness. Molech was at that time a god not unknown to the Israelites, for they are expressly warned against his cruel rites (Lev. xviii. 21); and if there is reason to suppose that he is the same as the Tyrian Baal, then this idolatry may be referred to the worship of Baal-peor on the plains of Moab (Num. xxv. 2, 3).

Ver. 44. Ἡ σκηνὴ τοῦ μαρτυρίου—the *tabernacle of witness*: the translation of מוֹעֵד לְהִתְקַבֵּל—"the tabernacle of the congregation." It is so called because it was the tent where God gave witness of Himself; on which the glory of God, the Shekinah, rested. There does not appear to be any designed contrast to σκηνὴ τοῦ Μολόχ. Καθὼς διετάξατο, etc.—*as He who spoke to Moses commanded to make it according to the*



*pattern which he had seen.* (See Ex. xxv. 40 ; Heb. viii. 5.) The holiness of the tabernacle was evident from this circumstance, that its pattern was revealed by God to Moses. As Stephen had been accused of blaspheming the Jewish religion, he here in his defence speaks with the greatest reverence of their sacred places.

Ver. 45. *Διαδεξάμενοι*—*having received*. The word literally signifies, having received by succession, or succeeded to. *Μετὰ Ἰησοῦ*—*with Jesus, i.e. Joshua* ; for the names Jesus and Joshua are the same, both signifying a saviour. *Ἐν τῇ κατασχέσει τῶν ἐθνῶν*—*into the possession of the Gentiles*. Here the preposition *ἐν* is used, when we would have expected *εἰς* : the probable force of it being, that the tabernacle was so brought into the possession of the Gentiles, that it permanently remained there ; the idea both of entrance and of subsequent rest being implied. Winer observes that the Greeks, even Homer, sometimes use *ἐν* with verbs of motion, to indicate at the same time the result of the motion, that is, rest (Winer's *Grammar*, p. 432). Meyer, De Wette, and Alford render the clause, “at their taking possession of the Gentiles.” *Ἔως τῶν ἡμερῶν Δαβίδ*—*until the days of David*. These words are to be connected with *ὧν ἔξωσεν*, “whom the Lord drove out until the days of David” (Kuinoel, Baumgarten, Alford)—inasmuch as the work of driving out the Canaanitish nations continued until the time of David—and not with *εἰσήγαγον*, “which our fathers brought in with Jesus until the days of David” (De Wette, Meyer, Lechler, Hackett, Cook), inasmuch as this is the more remote antecedent, and besides, hardly affords an intelligible sense.

Ver. 46. *Καὶ ᾐτήσατο*—*and requested* ; not *desired*, as in the English version. The medium of David's request and of God's answer was the prophet Nathan. *Σκήνωμα τῷ Θεῷ Ἰακώβ*—*a dwelling for the God of Jacob* : probably a quotation from Ps. cxxxii. 3 (Septuagint, cxxxi. 3). *Σκήνωμα*, *a dwelling*, in distinction from *σκηνή*, *a tent*.

Vers. 47, 48. *Σολομῶν δὲ ᾠκοδόμησεν*, etc.—*But Solomon built Him a house*. David was not permitted to build the temple, because he was a man of war, and the temple was to

be the abode of peace. Ἀλλ' οὐχ ὁ ὑψιστος ἐν χειροποιήτοις κατοικεῖ—*Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in what are made with hands.* Baur and Zeller suppose that there is here a designed depreciation of the temple on the part of Stephen—an attack upon the Jewish mode of worship. But there is no ground for such a supposition, as the same sentiment was expressed by Solomon himself, and indeed in stronger terms, at the dedication of the temple (1 Kings viii. 27).

Vers. 49, 50. The passage here quoted is from Isa. lxvi. 1, 2, and is taken almost verbatim from the Septuagint. Stephen here quotes this passage, because it was of importance for him to show that the spiritual worship which he inculcated, in opposition to the legalism of the Pharisees, had been already enforced by their own prophets.

Ver. 51. Σκληροτράχηλοι—*Ye stiff-necked.* Here, on a sudden, Stephen breaks out into an invective. Hitherto he had treated the subject historically, now he becomes personal in his remarks: hitherto his tone was calm and didactic, now it becomes vehement and passionate. Accordingly, some (Olshausen, Kuinöl, Heinrichs) account for this remarkable change on the supposition that he was here interrupted either by the shouts of his audience, or by their threatening gestures. Schwanbeck discovers here an omission of the reporter.<sup>1</sup> Others (Meyer, Lechler, Neander, Alford) think that the change of tone arose naturally out of the speech. "Stephen," observes Meyer, "has ended his calm historical narrative; but now it is time that the accused should become the bold accuser, and apply the result of his observations to his judges. Therefore he interrupts his calm defence, and as a prophet of reproof addresses his judges in the language of moral indignation." Neander supposes that the contemplation of the idolatries and wickedness which followed the age of Solomon overcame him, and filled his soul with holy indignation, which found vent in a torrent of rebuke against his ungodly and hypocritical judges: We have no right to suppose that Stephen here either indulged in impatience or

<sup>1</sup> Schwanbeck's *Quellen der Apostelgeschichte*, p. 252.

gave way to passion : he only exercised the function of a stern reprove of iniquity.

Ver. 52. *Τοῦ δικαίου*—*the Just One*. Stephen here for the first time reprimands the Jews with being the betrayers and murderers of their Messiah, and bears testimony to the Messiahship of Jesus. Their fathers had been moved with envy against Joseph, the saviour of their house, and had rejected Moses, the deliverer of their nation ; but this iniquity reached its height in themselves by the rejection and crucifixion of the Just One: this was the climax of the nation's guilt.

Ver. 53. *Εἰς διαταγὰς ἀγγέλων*—*as ordinances of angels*. Different meanings have been attached to these words. Some (Grotius, Calvin) render them, troops of angels being present ; but this would be to take *διαταγὰς* in the sense of *διατάξεις*, a meaning which it does not bear. Lightfoot supposes that *ἀγγέλων* here is to be taken in the sense of messengers, and that the prophets are meant. Chrysostom supposes that the angel who spoke unto Moses in the bush, the Jehovah Angel, is meant. The correct meaning seems to be, “as ordinances of angels” (Bengel, Lechler) : that is to say, that the Israelites received the law with such respect as if it were the ordinances of angels ; as Paul said of the Galatians, “Ye received me as an angel of God” (Gal. iv. 14). Or perhaps rather it may refer to the law being communicated by the ministration of angels. We have several intimations of the presence of angels at the giving of the law. In the Mosaic narrative there is no mention of it. Traces of it are, however, found in the Septuagint. Thus, in Deut. xxxiii. 2 we read *ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ ἄγγελοι μετ’ αὐτοῦ*, where the Hebrew has, “From His right hand went a fiery law for them.” In the Psalms we are informed that the angels were present at Sinai (Ps. lxxviii. 17). St. Paul expressly says that the law was ordained of angels—*διαταγὰς δι’ ἀγγέλων* (Gal. iii. 19). And the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews mentions it as “the word spoken by angels” (Heb. ii. 2). The same opinion was among the traditions of the Jews. Josephus mentions that the Jews learned the holiest part of the law from angels (*Ant.* xv. 5. 3).

## GENERAL REMARKS ON STEPHEN'S SPEECH.

Opinions are divided concerning this speech of Stephen. Some regard it as inconclusive, illogical, and full of errors; others praise it as a complete refutation of the charges brought against him, and as worthy of the fulness of the Spirit with which he was inspired. Erasmus says: "Many things in this speech have not very much pertinency to the matter in hand which Stephen undertook." On the other hand, Bengel observes: "Although he does not put his enunciations in direct contradiction to the enunciations of his adversaries, yet he answers all the charges with power" (Bengel's *Gnomon*, Acts vii. 1). The relation of the speech of Stephen, in all its particulars, to the charges brought against him is certainly at first sight not obvious; and, accordingly, different opinions have been formed as to the object which Stephen had in view. According to Grotius, Stephen's object is to show in an historical manner that the favour of God is not bound to any place, and that the Jews had no preference over those who were not Jews, in order to justify his prophecy concerning the destruction of the temple and the call of the Gentiles. But the doctrine concerning the call of the Gentiles appears neither to have been understood by Stephen, nor was it brought as a charge against him; and certainly there is no justification of it in his speech. According to Baur, the theme of the discourse consists in this: "The more gloriously God manifested His grace to Israel, even from the beginning, the more perverse and ungrateful was the conduct of the people;"<sup>1</sup> but such a theme suits only a portion of the speech. Meyer represents the chief thought of the speech to be as follows: "I stand here accused and persecuted, not because I am a blasphemer of the law and of the temple, but in consequence of that spirit of resistance to God and His messengers which ye, according to the testimony of history, have received from your fathers, and have yourselves fostered. Thus the guilt

<sup>1</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. i. p. 50; Zeller's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 148; Davidson's *New Introduction*, vol. ii. pp. 198, 199.



is not mine, but yours.”<sup>1</sup> Olshausen conceives that Stephen’s reason for narrating the history of the Old Testament was just to show the Jews that he believed it, and thus to induce them through love of their national history to listen with calm attention.<sup>2</sup> Chrysostom thinks that Stephen’s object was to prove the superiority of the promise to the law. “He shows here,” he observes, “that the promise was made before the place, before circumcision, before sacrifice, before the temple.”<sup>3</sup> Similar views are also advocated by Lüger and Baumgarten.

It is to be observed that the speech of Stephen is an unfinished production. He was interrupted before he came to the conclusion. He had only entered upon the principal part of his discourse—his testimony to Jesus as the Messiah. We are therefore to regard it as in a measure imperfect. It is indeed an apology or defence against the accusations with which he was charged. He shows that, so far from being a blasphemer of Moses, he honoured him as the prophet of God and the redeemer of Israel; and so far from attacking the temple, he regarded both it and the tabernacle as divine institutions. At the same time, he shows that what God requires is obedience and spiritual worship, and not mere reliance on outward privileges. But along with this apologetic nature of the discourse, there enters a strong polemic element. He attacks the legalism and unbelief of the Pharisees. In citing the examples of the rejection of Joseph and Moses by their fathers, he indirectly points to the rejection of Jesus; in recounting the apostasies of their forefathers, he describes in a figure the unbelief and rebellion of his hearers; and in that portion of his speech where his enemies interrupt him, as the intrepid messenger of God, he fearlessly attacks their obstinacy and resistance of the Holy Ghost, and, like Peter, charges them with being the betrayers and murderers of their Messiah. Stephen probably adopted the form of a historical narrative, in order to veil for a time his attack on

<sup>1</sup> Meyer’s *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 151, Dritte Auflage.

<sup>2</sup> Olshausen’s *Gospel and Acts*, vol. iv. p. 316, Clark’s translation.

<sup>3</sup> Chrysostom *on the Acts*, Hom. xv.

Jewish legalism, so that he might secure the attention of his hearers. This view of Stephen's speech is similar to that given by Neander. "The object of Stephen's discourse," he observes, "was not simple, but complex; yet it was so constructed that the different topics were linked together in the closest manner. Its primary object was certainly apologetic; but as he forgot himself in the subject with which he was inspired, his apologetic efforts relate to the truths maintained by him, and impugned by his adversaries, rather than to himself. Hence, not satisfied with defending, he developed and enforced the truths he had proclaimed; and at the same time condemned the carnal, ungodly temper of the Jews, which was little disposed to receive the truth. Thus, with the apologetic element, the didactic and polemic were combined. Stephen first refutes the charges made against him, of enmity against the people of God, of contempt of their sacred institutions, and of blaspheming Moses. He traces the procedure of the divine providence in guiding the people of God from the times of their progenitors. He notices the promises and their progressive fulfilment, to the end of all the promises, the end of the whole development of the theocracy—the advent of the Messiah, and the work to be accomplished by Him. But with this narrative he blends his charges against the Jewish nation. He shows that their ingratitude and unbelief, proceeding from a carnal mind, became more flagrant in proportion as the promises were fulfilled, or given with greater fulness; and their conduct in the various preceding periods of the development of God's kingdom was a specimen of the disposition they now evinced towards the publication of the gospel."<sup>1</sup>

The genuineness of Stephen's speech has been called in question by Baur and Zeller, but certainly without reason. It bears in its nature and contents the impress of authenticity. If a spurious composition, it would have borne a more direct relation to the accusations, and been a clearer refutation of them; or it would have been more fully an attack upon the Jewish rulers. The last verses of the speech

<sup>1</sup> Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. p. 52, Bohn's edition.

would have been more extended. The historical references also would have been more obvious in their application; and the apparent discrepancies to the Mosaic narrative, with which the speech abounds, would have been either fewer in number or entirely omitted.<sup>1</sup>

With regard to the mode of its transmission, we are not indeed to consider it as taken down by a shorthand writer in the court where it was uttered. This would be to transfer modern appliances to ancient times. But the speech of the first martyr must have made a deep impression on the church, and would probably be immediately noted down. Some of the disciples may have been present when it was delivered, or some of the members of the Sanhedrim may have been secret friends. Many (Baumgarten, Lüger, Wordsworth, Humphry, Alford) suppose that Paul himself was the reporter, as he was most probably present when the speech was made; but as at that time he was not a Christian, but an opponent, the supposition is, to say the least, doubtful. Stephen's speech, however, was probably a separate document, which Luke incorporated in his work, as there is a certain peculiarity of style and expression about it.

Opinions are divided as to the language in which the speech was spoken. Meyer supposes, that although a Hellenist, yet before the Sanhedrim Stephen must have spoken in the language of the country, that is, in the Aramaic dialect of the Hebrew. Others, again (De Wette, Lechler, Stier, Alford), think that Greek was the language employed. Greek was the native language of Stephen, and history informs us that it was occasionally employed in the judicial transactions of the Jews: besides, all the numerous references to the Old Testament are taken almost verbatim from the Septuagint. The mere fact, however, of all the quotations being from the Septuagint is no proof that the language in which Stephen spoke was Greek, inasmuch as they might fairly be thus inserted by the original reporter or by Luke.

<sup>1</sup> Dean Stanley enumerates no less than twelve variations from the Mosaic narrative.

## SECTION XIV.

### MARTYRDOM OF STEPHEN.—ACTS VII. 54–60.

54 But, hearing these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. 55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looking up stedfastly to heaven, saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56 And he said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God. 57 Then they, crying out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord. 58 And, casting him out of the city, they stoned him; and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man called Saul. 59 And they stoned Stephen, invoking and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. 60 And, falling on his knees, he cried with a loud voice, Lord, retain not this sin to them. And saying this, he fell asleep.

#### CRITICAL NOTE.

Ver. 56. *Ἀνεωργμένους*, found in D, E, H, is not so well attested as *διηνοργμένους*, found in A, B, C,  $\aleph$ , the reading preferred by Tischendorf.

#### EXEGETICAL REMARKS.

Ver. 54. *Ἀκούοντες δὲ ταῦτα*—*But hearing these things*. The speech of Stephen, especially its direct personal application at the close (vers. 51–53), enraged his audience. Their conscience told them that his reproofs were too well founded; and their rage, hitherto with much difficulty restrained, now found a vent. *Διεπρίοντο ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν*—*they were cut to the heart*; literally, *they were sawn through or asunder*—the same verb which is used in ch. v. 33. (See note.) A different verb is employed when it is said of the converts on the day of Pentecost, that “they were pierced



to the heart." There the verb is *κατανύσσω* (ch. ii. 37). *Καὶ ἔβρυχον τοὺς ὀδόντας ἐπ' αὐτόν*—and they gnashed on him with their teeth: an expression frequently used in the Old Testament to denote furious rage. See Job xvi. 9; Ps. xxxiv. 16, xxxvi. 12, in the Septuagint. Still, however, the members of the Sanhedrim had not recourse to open violence: they express their rage by threatening gestures. It was what follows that gave occasion to their assault upon Stephen.

Ver. 55. *Ὑπάρχων δὲ πλήρης Πνεύματος ἁγίου*—But he, being full of the Holy Ghost. Fixing his gaze upwards, a vision of heaven was granted to Stephen. The vision was internal, not external—subjective, not objective: it was seen by Stephen only, and not by any of his hearers. It is then childish to inquire how he could see through the roof of the chamber where they were assembled. To his spirit the heavens appeared opened; the veil that conceals the heavenly world from the view of mortals was removed; a visionary representation of heaven, and of Jesus standing at the right hand of God, was vouchsafed to him. "The scene before his eyes was no longer the council-hall at Jerusalem, and the circle of his infuriated judges; but he gazed up into the endless courts of the celestial Jerusalem, with its innumerable company of angels, and saw Jesus, in whose righteous cause he was about to die" (Conybeare and Howson). *Δόξαν Θεοῦ*—the glory of God, i.e. the glory in which God manifests Himself, the Shekinah of the Jews. (Compare ver. 2, *ὁ Θεὸς τῆς δόξης*.) *Ἰησοῦν ἐστῶτα ἐν δεξιῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ*—Jesus standing at the right hand of God. In other places, Jesus is represented as "sitting on the right hand of God" (Matt. xxvi. 64): but here Stephen sees Him standing; rising as it were from the throne of His glory to protect and defend His distressed servant, and to receive him. So Bengel: *Quasi obvium Stephano*. Or, as Gregory the Great expresses it, in a passage adduced by Kuinœl: *Sedere judicantis et imperantis est, stare vero pugnantis vel adjuvantis. Stephanus stantem vidit quem adiutorem habuit*. Alford's explanation, that the vision has reference to Joshua the

high priest standing in the presence of the angel of the Lord (Zech. iii. 1), and that Stephen, cited before the Sadducean high priest, is vouchsafed a vision of the heavenly High Priest standing and ministering at the throne, amid the angels and just men made perfect, is not so natural, and appears far-fetched. De Wette and other critics, on the other hand, think that to explain the mere posture of standing is fanciful, and is giving a mystical meaning to Scripture. All rationalistic attempts to explain this vision of Stephen are unavailing, and contradict the text: as that of Hezel, who supposes that Stephen, looking up, saw through the window a bright cloud, which he regarded as the symbol of the divine presence; that of Michaelis, who supposes that Stephen here only expressed his strong faith in the glory of Christ, and his approaching admission into heaven; and that of Baur, who thinks that the historian wished to give distinctness to his individual view of the subject, by expressing himself as if an ecstatic vision had actually been granted to Stephen.

Ver. 56. *Τοὺς οὐρανοὺς διηνοιγμένους*—*the heavens opened*. The plural is employed, according to the Jewish notion of three heavens—the air, the celestial firmament, and the highest heaven, or the immediate residence of the divine glory. Stephen saw through all these heavens: like Paul, he was carried in spirit to the third heaven. *Τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*—*the Son of man*. This title, which Christ often gave to Himself, was never applied to Him by any of the apostles or evangelists, except in this place by Stephen. It does not occur in the Gospels in the mouth of another, nor is it found at all in the epistles, nor elsewhere in the Acts of the Apostles. It is here used by Stephen, probably to denote that Jesus appeared to him in human form, as that same Jesus whom the Jewish rulers crucified, and also to intimate that this Jesus was the Messiah. The reference is probably to the name by which the Messiah was generally known among the Jews, as given Him by the prophet Daniel (Dan. vii. 13); and also because it was the peculiar Messianic name which Jesus most frequently appropriated to Himself.

The peculiar use of this name, as well as the mention of the singular posture of standing instead of sitting, are testimonies in favour of the authenticity of the narrative.

Ver. 57. *Κράξαντες δὲ φωνῇ μεγάλῃ*—*Then they, crying out with a loud voice.* When Stephen announced his vision, that he saw that same Jesus whom they had rejected and murdered standing as the Son of man—the promised Messiah—exalted to the right hand of eternal glory, their rage knew no bounds: they could restrain themselves no longer; their pent-up passions broke through every barrier. They interrupted him with loud shouts, perhaps that the charge of blasphemy brought against him was proved by his own words, and that he should be stoned to death (Acts xxii. 22). They stopped their ears, to prevent them hearing any more such blasphemy. They rushed upon him with one accord: the audience was worked up into a frenzy: the Jewish fanatics then present seized upon Stephen: and some of the members of the Sanhedrim perhaps joined in the outrage; for when passion is excited, reason and justice are gone.

Ver. 58. *Καὶ ἐκβαλόντες ἔξω τῆς πόλεως*—*and casting him out of the city.* According to the Mosaic law, malefactors among the Jews were executed without the gates of their cities (Lev. xxiv. 14). Thus our Lord suffered without the gate. *Locus lapidationis erat extra urbem; omnes enim civitates, muris cinctæ, paritatem habent ad castra Israelis:* Gloss in *Babyl. Sanhedr.* (Meyer.) *Ἐλιθοβόλουν*—*they stoned him.* Stoning was a Jewish mode of punishment inflicted on different kinds of capital offences. One of these offences was blasphemy, the crime of which Stephen was accused, and for which he was now stoned (Lev. xxiv. 16). The manner in which this punishment was inflicted is thus described by the Jewish rabbis:—The scaffold or place of stoning, to which the criminal was to be led with his hands bound, was to be twice the size of a man. One of the witnesses was then to smite him with a stone upon the breast, so as to throw him down. If he were not killed, the second witness was to throw another stone at him. And then, if he were yet alive, all the people were to stone him until he was

dead. The body was then to be suspended till sunset. (See Lightfoot's *Horæ Hebraicæ*.) *Καὶ οἱ μάρτυρες*—*and the witnesses*. According to the law of Moses, the witnesses were to cast the first stones (Deut. xvii. 6, 7). The witnesses here mentioned are those false witnesses who accused Stephen of speaking blasphemous words against the temple and the law (Acts vi. 13). "Although," observes Beza, "all these things were done tumultuously, and that not without violation of the authority of the governor of the province, yet they would seem to do nothing but what the law of God enjoined them." *Νεανίου καλουμένου Σαύλου*—*a young man named Saul*. The first mention of the great apostle of the Gentiles: he appears on the stage of ecclesiastical history in connection with the murder of Stephen, evidently a zealot of the pharisaical school, and a bitter enemy of Christianity. His name, Saul, was the same as that of the first king of Israel, who also, like him, belonged to the tribe of Benjamin. Probably the name, rendered illustrious by King Saul, was common in his native tribe. Paul is here called *νεανίας*, *a young man*; but this determines nothing as to his age, because this term is applied even up to the age of forty-five. Thus Varro says a man is young (*juvenis*) till forty-five, and aged at sixty. Dio Cassius calls Cæsar a young man when he was about forty. Thirty years after the martyrdom of Stephen, Paul speaks of himself as "being such an one as Paul the aged" (*πρεσβύτης*, Philem. 9); so that then he could not be under sixty.<sup>1</sup> Therefore at this period he must have been at least thirty; and indeed we can hardly suppose, if he were much under that age, that the Sanhedrim would have entrusted him with so important a commission, when they sent him to Damascus. Probably Chrysostom is not far from the truth, when he states that Paul, at the time of Stephen's death, was thirty-five. There is, however, no reason to suppose, with Alford and others, that he was a member of the Sanhedrim, and one of Stephen's judges. (See note to ch. xxvi.

<sup>1</sup> "How different," observes Dr. Wordsworth, "was Saul the young man from Paul the aged!"



10.) Paul does not seem to have taken any active part in the death of Stephen : he cast no stone at him ; but still, by willingly taking charge of the garments of those who slew him, he showed how heartily he consented to this deed of theirs. To this act he alludes, years afterwards, in his defence before the Jews : “ When the blood of Thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by and consenting to his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him ” (Acts xxii. 20).

Ver. 59. *Ἐπικαλούμενον*—*invoking*. It is not directly said whom Stephen invoked, but the prayer which follows intimates that it was Jesus. Hence, then, the ellipsis is either to be left unsupplied, or supplied either by the name “Jesus” or by the words “the Lord;” but not, as in our English version, by the name “God” (*calling upon God*). The effect of this interpolation is to draw away the attention from Jesus as the person to whom the prayer was addressed, and thus to obscure a strong proof of the divinity of Christ. *Κύριε Ἰησοῦ*—*Lord Jesus*. Here undoubtedly Stephen prays to Jesus; and all attempts to explain this away are unavailing, and rejected by critics even of the rationalistic school. It has been asserted that *Ἰησοῦ* is in the genitive, and that the words ought to be translated “Lord of Jesus;” but, as Kuinœl observes, this would require the article, and we should read *Κύριε τοῦ Ἰησοῦ*; and besides, the same words are used in Rev. xxii. 20, *ἔρχου Κύριε Ἰησοῦ*, where *Ἰησοῦ* is undoubtedly in the vocative. Paul describes Christians as those who “call upon the name of Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. i. 2). *Δέξαι τὸ πνεῦμά μου*—*receive my spirit*. The petition is not similar to the impatient requests of Moses (Num. xi. 15), Elijah (1 Kings xix. 4), and Jonah (Jonah iv. 3), that God would take away their lives; but it is a request that God would receive His spirit after martyrdom—similar to the prayer of Jesus on the cross, “Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit” (Luke xxiii. 46). Thus, then, Stephen worships Christ in the same manner as Christ before His death worshipped the Father.

Ver. 60. *Θεῖς δὲ τὰ γόνατα*—*falling on his knees* : either

as the appropriate attitude of prayer, or perhaps thrown down upon his knees by the stoning. *Μὴ στήσῃς αὐτοῖς τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ταύτην*—*retain not this sin to them*. Grotius renders these words, “Weigh not this sin to them,” *i.e.* Punish them not according to their deserts; but to this Meyer and De Wette object that it is not the sin, but the punishment, which is weighed. Meyer renders them, “Fix not this sin upon them;” a negative corresponding to the positive expression, Forgive them this sin. De Wette renders them, “Retain not this sin to them”—let it not be treasured up against them; similar to our English version, “Lay not this sin to their charge.” Here again the words employed are similar to those uttered by Jesus on the cross, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke xxiii. 34). Doubtless this prayer of the dying Stephen was heard, and his request granted; to what extent, we cannot tell. But among those present there was one who was afterwards converted, who rose up in the martyr’s stead, another and a mightier Stephen; and though perhaps somewhat fanciful, yet it is a pleasing thought to associate the conversion of Paul with the martyrdom of Stephen, and to say in the memorable words of St. Augustine, *Si Stephanus non orasset, ecclesia Paulum non haberet*. Ἐκοιμήθη—he fell asleep. A description of his calm and peaceful death. Although murdered by violent hands, yet his end was as a quiet sleep—a translation rather than a death. Although this verb is occasionally used by heathen writers to express death, yet it is consecrated as a Christian term. Death is sleep to believers. (See John xi. 11; 1 Cor. xi. 30; 1 Thess. iii. 13.) The body sleeps in the sure and certain hope of a blessed resurrection. Hence the Christian term for the place of burial, *cemetery*, is just the Greek term *κοιμητήριον*, *a place for sleeping*.

Such was the death of Stephen. “He was,” as Eusebius observes, “the first after our Lord, who at the time of ordination, as if ordained to this very purpose, was stoned to death by the murderers of the Lord. And thus he first received the crown, answering to his name (στέφανος), of the

victorious martyrs of Christ" (*Hist. Eccl.* ii. 1). In reality, by his calm courage, his noble confession, above all, his forgiving spirit, he was the conqueror; whereas his enemies who put him to death, by their brutal rage, their contempt of justice, and their blind fury, were vanquished. The truth for which Stephen bled gained the victory over the violence which his enemies employed; and in consequence of his death, the cause for which he suffered penetrated beyond Jerusalem to Samaria, Antioch, Europe, and the ends of the earth.

Opinions differ as to the *time* and *place* of Stephen's martyrdom. With regard to the place of martyrdom, all that we are told in Scripture is, that it was outside of Jerusalem. There are two traditions: the earlier is that Stephen was put to death at the north of Jerusalem, beyond what is now called the Damascus gate; and the more recent, which is the present tradition, is that the scene of martyrdom was to the east of Jerusalem, near the brook Kidron, outside of the gate which is now called, in honour of the martyr, St. Stephen's gate. With regard to the time, ecclesiastical tradition has fixed on the 26th of December of the year of our Lord's crucifixion. But this is obviously erroneous, as it is impossible to compress all that occurred in the interval between the crucifixion and the death of Stephen within the short space of a few months. The most probable as well as the most common opinion, is that which fixes upon the year 36 as the date. Considering the previous extension of Christianity, the number of disciples in Jerusalem, and the gradual growth of hostility on the part of the Jewish people, it could hardly have been earlier. Wieseler fixes on the year 39, and Meyer on the year 33 or 34.

It is disputed whether the death of Stephen was the result of a legal condemnation of the Sanhedrim, or an act of popular violence committed without legal authority. The question is not easily answered: as, on the one hand, there is no mention of a formal sentence, but rather an intimation of violence (vers. 57, 58); and, on the other hand, there was a regular trial before the Sanhedrim, and the execution was

performed according to the regulations of the Mosaic law. Some (Biscoe, Ewald, De Wette, Humphry) suppose that there was a formal and regular sentence of death pronounced upon him by the Sanhedrim. The great objection to this view is, not that there is no mention of such a sentence, but that at this time the Sanhedrim had not power to put such a sentence into execution, the Romans having deprived them of the power of life and death. Hence the statement of the Jewish rulers to Pilate, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death" (John xviii. 31); a statement the truth of which is presupposed by Josephus (*Ant.* xx. 9, 1), and directly affirmed by the Talmud. (See note on the Sanhedrim.) To this Ewald replies, that the Sanhedrim might appeal to the permission granted them by Pilate in John xviii. 31;<sup>1</sup> but Pilate did not then give them permission to inflict the punishment of death, but merely told the Jews to judge Jesus according to their laws, which permitted them to inflict lesser punishments. Paul, indeed, says that he persecuted Christians even to the death, and that when they were put to death he gave his vote against them (Acts xxii. 4, xxvi. 10); but here either the permission of the Roman government might have been obtained, or the zealots among the Jews may, as was often the case at this period, have taken the law into their own hands.

Others (Calvin, Beza, Neander, Olshausen, Meyer, Lechler, Lange, Hackett, Alford, Wordsworth) suppose that the death of Stephen was an act of popular fury; or if a sentence of the Sanhedrim were pronounced (which is not evident), that they, in carrying it into effect, exceeded their legal power; and this seems to be the more probable opinion. In the excitement of the moment, Stephen was violently seized, dragged out of the city, and stoned to death. That the Jews attended to the regulations of the Mosaic law concerning stoning, is no objection to this view of the subject, as religious fanatics are often scrupulous about these matters. Similar instances of violence were at that time of frequent occurrence in Jewish history. Thus, on

<sup>1</sup> Ewald's *Geschichte*, p. 195.



one occasion in the life of our Lord, we are informed that the Jews took up stones to stone Him (John viii. 59); and in a somewhat similar manner to Stephen, James the Just was put to death. On that occasion, indeed, the high priest Ananus and the Sanhedrim passed formal sentence of death, and carried that sentence into execution. But for this illegal act Ananus was deposed from the priesthood by the Roman governor (Joseph. *Ant.* xx. 9. 1). Some suppose that the martyrdom of Stephen took place shortly after the deposition of Pontius Pilate, and before his successor had arrived, when there was no proper Roman authority to put down disturbances; in like manner as James the Just was put to death after the decease of Festus, and before the arrival of Albinus. At all events, it is well known that the Romans were accustomed to connive at these disturbances when they did not materially interfere with their interests.

Baur considers the violent death of Stephen as a proof that the whole trial before the Sanhedrim is unhistorical. He thinks it incredible that such an act of violence should have been perpetrated before a court of justice; and that there should have been such a contrast between the calm hearing of Stephen and the passionate termination of the trial.<sup>1</sup> But it is to be observed, that at the commencement of Stephen's address his object was not apparent; he might even seem as if about to retract his opinions; he spoke reverently of Moses, of the law, of the temple; until near the close there was no allusion to Jesus; and it was not until then that he directly charged the Jewish rulers with being the betrayers and murderers of their Messiah. Then it was that their rage broke forth, and this must have greatly increased and become irrepressible when Stephen called aloud that he saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God. If Stephen were now allowed to escape unhurt, it would be a confession on the part of the Sanhedrim that they had been guilty of shedding the blood of their Messiah. According to their standpoint, they must find the charges of the witnesses proved; for either they were murderers, or Stephen was a blasphemer.

<sup>1</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. i. p. 61.

And supposing that no regular sentence was pronounced, we are not to wonder that they should have permitted their prisoner to have been put to death by violence. Such acts of violence were then not unusual among the Jews: the principles of the sect of the Zealots were, that they should take the punishment of offenders into their own hand; and doubtless the Sanhedrim would be well pleased in this manner to get rid of so able and dreaded an opponent. Indeed, it is in itself not improbable that some of its members joined in the tumult.

## SECTION XV.

PLANTING OF THE CHURCH IN SAMARIA.—ACTS VIII. 1-13.

1 And Saul was consenting to his death. And there arose at that time a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all dispersed through the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 And devout men buried Stephen, and made great mourning over him. 3 But Saul laid waste the church, entering in from house to house, and dragging away both men and women, committed them to prison. 4 They therefore who were dispersed went about preaching the word. 5 And Philip having gone down to a city of Samaria, preached the Christ to them. 6 And the people with one accord gave heed to the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the signs which he did. 7 For from many who had unclean spirits these came out, crying with a loud voice: and many paralyzed and lame were healed. 8 And there was great joy in that city. 9 But a certain man, Simon by name, formerly practised sorcery in that city, and astonished the nation of Samaria, saying that he was some great one: 10 To whom they gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the power of God, which is called Great. 11 And to him they gave heed, because for a long time they had been astonished by his sorceries. 12 But when they believed Philip preaching concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 13 And Simon also himself believed: and being baptized, he continued with Philip; and beholding the miracles and signs which were done, he was astonished.

### CRITICAL NOTES.

Ver. 5. The article τὴν before πόλιν occurs in A, B,  $\aleph$ , but is considered an addition in order to designate the city Samaria. It is omitted in C, D, E, H, and erased by Tischendorf, Meyer, and De Wette. Ver. 7. Πολλῶν is only found in H, but is retained by Griesbach, Tischendorf, De Wette, and Meyer, as being the more probable reading. Πολλοί, found in A, B, C, E,  $\aleph$ , is supposed to have been

a correction to correspond with the latter clause of the verse. 'Εξήρχοντο is the reading of A, B, C, D, E,  $\aleph$ , and is preferred by Tischendorf to ἐξήρχετο, the reading of H. Ver. 10. 'Η καλουμένη before μεγάλη is attested by A, B, C, D, E,  $\aleph$ , and is inserted by all the recent critics. Ver. 12. Τά before περί is wanting in A, B, C, D, E,  $\aleph$ , and is accordingly omitted by Lachmann and Tischendorf. Ver. 13. Μεγάλας is wanting in two uncial mss., G, H, and is regarded as an interpolation by Tischendorf and Meyer. Great variations also occur in the position of the words. The reading which Tischendorf adopts is, δυνάμεις καὶ σημεῖα γινόμενα.

#### EXEGETICAL REMARKS.

Ver. 1. Σαῦλος δὲ ἦν συνευδοκῶν τῇ ἀναιρέσει αὐτοῦ—*And Saul was consenting to his death.* This sentence has been considered by Tischendorf and Hackett as forming the conclusion of the account of Stephen's martyrdom; but it rather appears to be introductory to the account of the general persecution which now follows. Συνευδοκῶν, not *assenting*, but *consenting*—taking an active part, joining with those who put Stephen to death. “When the blood of Thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting to his death” (Acts xxii. 20, where the same words are repeated by Paul himself). Ἀναιρέσει, a stronger term than *death*, perhaps *murder*. Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ—*and there arose on that day.* Most critics (Lechler, Meyer, De Wette) take these words literally, and suppose that on the same day on which Stephen was slain, a general persecution against the church commenced. The martyrdom of Stephen was but the prelude to the onslaught upon the Christians.<sup>1</sup> The multitude, having tasted blood, became ferocious. There is

<sup>1</sup> This would especially be the case if, as some suppose, the death of Stephen involved a legal decision that Christianity was blasphemy, and therefore a capital offence: it could not then be professed without danger to life. This would follow even supposing the Sanhedrim, in passing sentence against Stephen, had exceeded its powers.



nothing improbable in this view of the subject. However, as all that is here mentioned concerning the dispersion of the disciples could hardly have occurred on a single day, the words are probably to be taken indefinitely—"at that time" (English version). It is true that, in general, the phrase is limited to the particular day; but occasionally it admits of a wider signification (see John xiv. 20, xvi. 23, 26). *Διωγμὸς μέγας*—*a great persecution*. This was an important crisis in the history of the church. The people of Israel, once favourable, had now become decidedly hostile. The Pharisees, formerly neutral, were now united with the Sadducees in hatred to the Christians. The prudent counsels of Gamaliel no longer exerted a restraining influence; and the Roman government does not appear to have interfered for the protection of the Christians. Perhaps, as has already been hinted, this persecution occurred during the vacancy of the Roman procuratorship, after the deposition of Pilate, and before the arrival of the new procurator Marullus; and that advantage of this was taken by the Jews. *Πάντες δὲ διεσπάρησαν*—*and they were all dispersed*. It is improbable, and indeed at variance with the mention made soon after of the church at Jerusalem (ch. ix. 26), that all the Christians, with the sole exception of the apostles, were dispersed. Accordingly, Bengel restricts *πάντες* to the teachers; and Baur, Zeller, De Wette, and Renan, to the Hellenistic Christians. Baumgarten supposes that the dispersion refers to an assembly of Christians who were then met together. He thinks that the rabble, returning from the murder of Stephen, burst in upon that assembly, and dispersed it; and that the dispersion through the regions of Judea and Samaria was subsequent. "The assembly," he observes, "were all scattered abroad, the apostles as well as the rest; but as for the dispersion into the regions of Judea and Samaria, there were many among the dispersed who were not driven to these quarters, and especially the apostles."<sup>1</sup> He accordingly limits *πάντες διεσπάρησαν* to those disciples who were then assembled. But this limitation is not suggested by the text;

<sup>1</sup> Baumgarten's *Apostolic History*, vol. i. pp. 169, 170.

on the contrary, the words *κατὰ τὰς χώρας τῆς Ἰουδαίας καὶ Σαμαρείας* are directly connected with *διεσπάρησαν*. It is best to understand *πάντες* as a hyperbolical expression (Meyer, Lechler),—not that all Christians, with the sole exception of the apostles, but that very many of them, had to fly from Jerusalem: *multi* (Kuinoel). For a similar use of *πάντες*, see Matt. iii. 5, Mark i. 33. *Πλὴν τῶν ἀποστόλων*—*except the apostles*. Whilst other Christians took their flight from Jerusalem, the apostles remained: they were preserved by the providence of God in the centre of the persecution. We might indeed have expected that they would have been the first to be attacked; but perhaps some portion of that veneration with which the people formerly regarded them (Acts v. 13) still remained: as yet, they did not venture to attack them. The apostles regarded Jerusalem as their post of duty; perhaps, as Meyer supposes, they held that the centre of the old theocracy was to be the centre of the new. Jerusalem was still to them the holy city, the future capital of the Messianic kingdom. According to an ancient tradition, the apostles were commanded by our Lord to remain for twelve years in Jerusalem. Thus Apollonius, who wrote in the second century, states that it was handed down by tradition, that our Saviour commanded His disciples not to depart from Jerusalem for twelve years (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* v. 18). And the same tradition is recorded in the apocryphal work entitled *The Preaching of Peter*: “The Lord said to His apostles, If any one therefore of Israel repent, and through my name be willing to believe in God, his sins shall be forgiven him. After twelve years, go ye out into the world, lest any say, We have not heard.”

Ver. 2. *Ἄνδρες εὐλαβεῖς* — *devout men*. It is disputed whether these “devout men” were Christians, or Jews favourably disposed to Christianity, but who had not openly avowed themselves. Some (Heinrichs, Ewald, De Wette) suppose that they were Christians who showed this mark of respect to the first martyr of their faith. Others (Kuinoel, Meyer, Baumgarten, Olshausen, Lange, Stier, Lechler) sup-

pose that they were religious Jews secretly inclined to Christianity, who had now the courage to declare their respect for the martyred Stephen; as Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus buried Christ. It is argued that *ἄνδρες εὐλαβεῖς* is the phrase employed to denote devout Jews who were not Christians (Acts ii. 5). The only exception to this remark is Ananias, who, according to the probable reading of the text, is called *ἀνὴρ εὐλαβής* (Acts xxii. 12). Further, it is suggested that, in consequence of the outbreak of the persecution, the Christians would have been hindered from burying Stephen; and if not, that Luke would have designated them more distinctly by the word "disciples," "believers," or "brethren." Upon the whole, the probability is, that the devout men here mentioned were friends and admirers of Stephen, who had not openly avowed themselves to be Christians. The simple statement of Luke concerning the burial of Stephen has been expanded into an elaborate legend. Four hundred years after this, Gamaliel appeared in a vision to Lucius, a presbyter of the church of Jerusalem, and informed him where the body of Stephen lay. The high priest had designed that the corpse should be devoured by beasts of prey; but Gamaliel rescued it, and buried it at his own villa at Caphar Gamala, twenty miles from Jerusalem. All the apostles attended the funeral, and the mourning lasted forty days. Gamaliel himself, and Nicodemus, were afterwards buried in the same grave. The relics of Stephen, thus miraculously discovered, were brought to Jerusalem, and authenticated by the many miracles wrought by them among the people. They were afterwards buried at the supposed scene of his martyrdom, and a magnificent church was erected over them by the Empress Eudoxia in 460. (See Conybeare and Howson; Smith's *Dictionary*, art. Stephen.)

Ver. 3. *Ἐλυμáινετο*—*laid waste*, made havoc of, raged like some furious beast of prey. *Κατὰ τοὺς οἴκους*—*from house to house*. Saul was the first inquisitor. In this persecution he was without doubt supported by the authority of the Sanhedrim: access was afforded him into the houses of private individuals, and the public prison was at his command.

There are many references to this persecution in his speeches (Acts xxii. 4, 19, xxvi. 9–11). It was then that he caused the Christians to be scourged in the synagogues; and, as it would appear, Stephen was not the only one who was put to death. And it was then also, what must have been to many worse than imprisonment and death, that he compelled them to blaspheme the holy name of Jesus. The dispersion of the disciples was promoted by his intolerant zeal; for, as he himself tells us, he persecuted them even unto strange cities.

Ver. 4. *Διήλθον*—*went through*; *i.e.*, they spread themselves through the countries to which they had fled. Thus the death of Stephen and the persecution at Jerusalem served to the increase of the church. The church at Jerusalem was violently broken up, but the consequence was its extension in other quarters. *Sanguis martyrum, semen Christianorum* (Tertullian). At first the dispersed betook themselves to the regions of Judea and Samaria. But soon they spread farther: "Some of them travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word" (Acts xi. 19). Probably at this time Ananias went to Damascus, and some of the dispersed penetrated even to Rome; for, among the Christians there, we find mention made of Andronicus and Junia, who were of note among the apostles, and who were also in Christ before Paul's conversion (Rom. xvi. 7).

Ver. 5. *Φίλιππος δὲ κατελθὼν*—*and Philip went down*. This Philip must not be mistaken for Philip the apostle; a mistake made by Polycrates, and apparently adopted by Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* iii. 31), though in another part of his history he correctly informs us that this Philip was one of those who had been ordained to the office of deacon (*Hist. Eccl.* ii. 1). That he was Philip the deacon, is evident from several considerations. First, we are informed that the apostles remained behind at Jerusalem. Secondly, when tidings of the conversion of the Samaritans came to Jerusalem, the Apostles John and Peter were sent to confer on the converts the gift of the Holy Ghost, which would not have been the case had Philip been an apostle. And thirdly,



at the conclusion of this narrative, we are informed that Philip came to Cæsarea (Acts viii. 40); and we read that afterwards, when Paul came to Cæsarea, he abode in the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven (Acts xxi. 8). In the list of the seven deacons, Philip is mentioned second; and he now succeeds Stephen as a preacher of the gospel, and, like him, is the instrument of a further extension of the church. It is probable that the office of "evangelist" (Eph. iv. 11), under the guidance of the Spirit, arose at this time from the course of events. Philip is expressly termed an "evangelist;" and others among the dispersed performed the functions of evangelists.

*Εἰς πόλιν τῆς Σαμαρείας*—into a city of Samaria. Erasmus, Beza, Calvin, Kuinœl, Wordsworth, suppose that τῆς Σαμαρείας is the name of the city, and not of the country. The old city of Samaria was rebuilt by Herod the Great, and called Sebaste in honour of Augustus; but still, as we find from Josephus, it was occasionally called by its old name (*Ant.* xx. 6. 2). But if the city had been meant, either the definite article would have been placed before πόλιν (see Critical Note), or Samaria would have been placed in apposition in the accusative. Σαμαρείας, then, is the name of the country; and therefore all opinions regarding the particular city to which Philip came are mere conjectures. Some (Grotius, Ewald, De Wette) conjecture that, although not expressly named, Samaria, the then recognised capital of the country, is meant; but it is improbable that this city would be so indefinitely mentioned as "a city of Samaria." Others (Olshausen, Alford) think that the more considerable city of Shechem is meant, where our Lord Himself preached, and so prepared the way for the introduction of Christianity (John iv. 5). *Τὸν Χριστόν*—the Christ. That is, Philip preached to them Jesus as the Messiah promised to the Jews, and whom the Samaritans also expected (John iv. 25).

Vers. 6–8. When Philip preached Jesus to the Samaritans as the Messiah, they gave him a favourable hearing; and this was in part occasioned by the miracles which he performed among them. If the city was Shechem, the previous

preaching of Christ was another cause of their favourable reception of Philip. Different translations have been given of ver. 7. Kuinœl supposes *πνεύματα* to be in the nominative, and would translate the clause as in our version: "For unclean spirits came out of many who were possessed of them." If *πολλοί*, which has the preponderance of authorities, be the correct reading, the words are to be rendered, "For many of them who had unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out." Bengel observes that Luke in the Acts never employs the term *δαιμόνια* in speaking of those possessed, although in his Gospel he employs it oftener than any other evangelist; and from this he infers that the power of possession was feebler after the death of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 9. *Ἀνὴρ δέ τις ὀνόματι Σίμων*—*but a certain man, Simon by name*. Most critics (Rosenmüller, Kuinœl, De Wette, Gieseler, Neander, Lechler, Alford) suppose this Simon to be the same as Simon the magician mentioned by Josephus. The following is the account given us by Josephus: Felix being enamoured with Drusilla, the daughter of Herod Agrippa I., and the wife of Azizus king of Emesa, sent to her one of his friends, whose name was Simon. He was a Jew, a Cyprian by birth, and professed to be a magician. This man endeavoured to persuade her to forsake her husband Azizus, and to marry Felix, promising that she would ensure to herself great happiness if she did so (*Ant.* xx. 7. 2). Justin Martyr gives a different account of Simon Magus: he says that he was a Samaritan by birth, a native of Gitta, or Gitton, in Samaria. This statement of Justin, however, is of no great authority, as he lived a hundred years afterwards; and his account is full of those traditionary legends which afterwards arose concerning Simon. Alford ingeniously attempts to reconcile the statements of Josephus and Justin, by supposing that either Justin or Josephus may have confounded Gittim with Chitum—that is, Citium in Cyprus. A more considerable objection to the identification arises from the difference of time, as about twenty years intervened

<sup>1</sup> The consideration of the nature of demoniacal possession is deferred until in the course of the exposition we come to ch. xix. 13–16.

between the encounter of Philip with Simon Magus and the employment of Simon by Felix; and it is highly improbable that the magician, especially after his wickedness was disclosed by the Apostles Peter and John, would have successfully carried on his knavery for so long a period. Besides, Simon was one of the most common of Jewish names; and at that period sorcerers were numerous throughout the East. The points of resemblance between these two persons—both called by the name of Simon, and both professing to be magicians—are too few and slight to serve as grounds of identification. We therefore regard this attempt to identify Simon Magus with Simon the magician mentioned by Josephus as a failure, arising from an unreasonable desire to identify persons mentioned in Scripture with historical characters, to whom they bear only a remote resemblance; an exercise of the imagination which in sober criticism ought not to be fostered, but restrained. (For ecclesiastical traditions concerning Simon, see note to ver. 24.)

*Μαγέων*—*used sorcery*. Simon was one of those magicians or sorcerers who were then frequent in the East. It was a period of a great religious crisis; there was a general expectation throughout the East of the advent of some great deliverer: the Messianic notions of the Jews were spread abroad; and hence many impostors, taking advantage of this expectation, deceived the people. We have examples of them in Elymas the sorcerer (Acts xiii.); in Apollonius of Tyana in Cappadocia, a contemporary of the apostles; and in Alexander of Abonoteichos in Pontus (Lucian). These men went about as sorcerers, and deceived the people with their tricks, perhaps by possessing a superior knowledge of the laws of nature, especially of chemistry. As astrologers, they pretended to read the fortunes of individuals in the heavenly bodies; and as magicians, they deceived the people by their magical arts, and thus obtained credit as if they were actually endowed with supernatural powers.

*Λέγων εἶναί τινα ἑαυτὸν μέγαν*—*saying that he was some great one*. Simon Magus professed to be some distinguished person, some famous prophet, a messenger sent from heaven

endowed with supernatural powers. The opinion which the people formed of him—and which, doubtless, he fostered, if he did not by his own assertions directly give rise to it—was, that he was the power of God, which is called Great. These pretensions are greatly enlarged by the traditions of the church. Justin Martyr tells us that Simon asserted that he was God, above all principality, power, and virtue. Irenæus says that he boasted that he appeared to the Samaritans as the Father, to the Jews as the Son, and to the Gentiles as the Holy Ghost (*Adv. Hær.* i. 23. 3). According to Jerome, he said: “I am the Word of God, I am the Paraclete, I am the Almighty, I am all things of God” (Jerome on Matt. xxiv. 5),—extravagant declarations, supposing an acquaintance with the doctrines of Christianity which Simon Magus could not at that time have possessed.

Ver. 10. ὁ προσεῖχον—to whom they gave heed. The expectation which was raised concerning the advent of some great deliverer, as well as the general want of faith in the religions of the Gentiles, had created in men’s minds a susceptibility to religious impressions, a certain craving after the supernatural. Hence they were liable to be deluded by the pretensions of false prophets. “At that time,” observes Neander, “an indefinite longing after a new communication from heaven—an ominous restlessness in the minds of men, such as generally precedes great changes in the history of mankind—was diffused abroad; so this indistinct anxiety did not fail to lead astray and to deceive many who were not rightly prepared for it, while they adopted a false method of allaying it.”<sup>1</sup> Ἀπὸ μικροῦ ἕως μεγάλου—from little to great; i.e. both young and old. Οὗτός ἐστιν ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡ καλουμένη μεγάλη—this man is the power of God, which is called Great. Neander and Meyer suppose that the Samaritans here refer to the philosophical notions of the Alexandrian school concerning the Logos, and that they supposed Simon Magus to be an incarnation of the Logos—a power or emanation of God. But it is improbable that these philosophical notions were prevalent among so secluded a

<sup>1</sup> Neander’s *Planting*, vol. i. pp. 57–60.



people as the Samaritans. De Wette thinks that the Samaritans regarded Simon as an angel in human form, because angels were called by them "powers of God" (*δυνάμεις*). Others suppose that they regarded him as the Messiah—"the highest power of God." But most probably all that is meant was, that they looked upon him as a person endowed with supernatural powers; they regarded his magical arts as real miracles; and perhaps formed some indistinct notion that he was a being of supernatural origin. According to the tradition of the church, an altar was erected to Simon at Rome, where he was worshipped as a god. (See note to ver. 24.)

Ver. 12. When Philip came and preached the kingdom of God—the Messianic kingdom—and Jesus as the Messiah; and when he confirmed his preaching by real miracles, which not only cast the false miracles of Simon into the shade, but disclosed their falsehood, the Samaritans became converts, and were baptized. They were more disposed to believe on Jesus Christ than the Jews, because they do not seem, like the Jews, to have expected the Messiah as a temporal deliverer, but rather as a moral restorer.

Ver. 13. *Ὁ δὲ Σίμων καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπίστευσε*—*and Simon also himself believed.* Here we have a simple statement of a fact, that Simon himself believed as well as the Samaritans. Some suppose that Simon here merely acted the hypocrite: that what he did believe was not that Jesus was the Messiah, but that Philip was a greater magician than himself; and that he attached himself to Philip, in order either to hide the shame of his defeat, or to discover the secret of Philip's miraculous powers (Grotius, Limborch, Kuinöl). Certainly his offer to purchase the Holy Ghost appears to justify this view of the subject. But perhaps he was for a time impressed: he felt the falsehood of his own pretences, and the reality of Philip's powers. The idea that Jesus was the Messiah may have forcibly struck him; and thus, overcome by the power of truth, he made profession of his faith in Jesus, and was baptized. That these impressions were temporary, that his heart was unchanged, the result soon

showed. *Ἐξίστατο*—*he was astonished*. As Simon had astonished the Samaritans by his sorceries, so he in his turn was astonished by the miracles of Philip. It is the same word which had been used in vers. 9, 11 to express the impression which Simon's sorceries made on the Samaritans; a fact which is lost sight of in our English version by the word being there translated "bewitched," whilst here it is more properly rendered "wondered."

---

## ON SAMARIA.

The district of Samaria was the middle portion of Palestine. It was bounded by Galilee on the north, the Jordan on the east, Judea on the south, and the Mediterranean on the west. It included the possessions of the tribes of Ephraim, and that part of Manasseh which lay west of Jordan, and perhaps a small portion of the tribe of Issachar. "The country of Samaria," observes Josephus, "lies between Judea and Galilee: it begins at a village that is in the great plain (Esdraelon), called Ginea, and ends at the toparchy of Acrabbene (in the lower part of the tribe of Ephraim)." (*Bell. Jud.* iii. 3. 4.)

The Samaritans were originally colonists planted in the district by Shalmaneser, or, according to others, by Esarhaddon, the king of Assyria. "The king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria, instead of the children of Israel" (2 Kings xvii. 24). And Josephus says: "Shalmaneser removed the Israelites out of their country, and placed therein the nation of the Cutheans, who had formerly belonged to the inner parts of Persia and Media, but were then called Samaritans by taking the name of the country to which they were removed" (*Ant.* x. 9. 7). "They are called in the Hebrew tongue Cutheans, but in the Greek Samaritans" (*Ant.* ix. 14. 3). Some suppose that the Sa-

maritans were purely of Gentile origin, and only mixed with those Jews who afterwards came among them as renegades. Others suppose that they are a mixed people, composed partly of the Israelites who remained after the Assyrian captivity, and partly of the colonists implanted. Whichever opinion is the more correct, it is probable that Gentile blood constituted the chief element of the nation; and that the Israelites whom the Assyrians left, if there were any, were exceedingly few.

The Samaritans, however, at an early period in their history, forsook their idolatrous practices, and embraced the Mosaic religion. On the return of the Jews under Ezra, they made proposals to unite with them in rebuilding the temple of Jerusalem; which proposals, however, the Jews rejected. Similar advances made to Nehemiah met with a similar refusal. Irritated at this treatment, they erected a temple for themselves upon Mount Gerizim, and consecrated the renegade Manasseh, the son of the high priest Joiada, as their first priest (Neh. xiii. 28), and thus set up a rival worship to that at Jerusalem. In the division of the empire of Alexander, Samaria along with Judea fell to the lot of the Syrian kings. During the severe persecutions of the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes, the Samaritans joined their adversaries, and gained the favour of the Syrian king by dedicating their temple on Mount Gerizim to Jupiter. They were at length conquered by John Hyrcanus, who destroyed their temple, and incorporated them into the Jewish kingdom. On the dissolution of this kingdom by the deposition of Archelaus, the son of Herod the Great, they passed over to the Romans, and became part of the province of Syria. Although bitter enemies to the Jews, yet they were involved with them in the same calamities during the Jewish war; Josephus informs us that Cerialis, one of Vespasian's generals, slew 11,600 Samaritans at Mount Gerizim (*Bell. Jud.* iii. 7. 32). After this there is little mention of them as a nation, until the reign of Zeno toward the end of the fifth century, when they were nearly extirpated in consequence of an outrage committed by them

on the Christians at Shechem. They remained in obscurity until the sixteenth century, when the correspondence between them and the illustrious Scaliger again brought them into notice.

The Jews and the Samaritans entertained the most violent hatred toward each other. Although both professing the Mosaic religion, and living under the same government, they regarded each other as enemies. We find in the Gospels that the Samaritans prevented Jesus and His disciples passing through their country, because they were going to keep the passover at Jerusalem. Josephus informs us that they waylaid and robbed the pilgrims from Galilee to Jerusalem (*Ant.* xx. 6. 1); and that once they designedly polluted the temple, by scattering dead men's bones in the cloisters (*Ant.* xviii. 2. 2). When the Jews were in prosperity, the Samaritans professed themselves to be Jews; but when they were in adversity, they joined their enemies, and asserted their Gentile origin (*Ant.* ix. 14. 3). The Jews, on the other hand, repaid this enmity of the Samaritans with interest. "To be a Samaritan and to have a devil" was the strongest expression of reproach which they could pronounce. They would have no dealings with them (John iv. 9), and regarded them as aliens. "There are two manner of nations," says the wise son of Sirach, "whom my heart abhorreth, and the third is no nation : they that sit on the mountain of Samaria, and they that dwell among the Philistines ; and the foolish people that dwell in Shechem" (Ecclus. l. 25, 26). The accumulated mutual wrongs of ages embittered the resentment of these two nations; the foreign origin of the Samaritans caused them to be despised by the Jews; and especially the erection of a temple on Mount Gerizim as the rival to that on Mount Zion, and the destruction of the Samaritan temple by John Hyrcanus, must have perpetuated their hatred.

The Samaritans from the time of Manasseh, their first high priest, received the law of Moses in all its strictness and purity. They rejected the traditions of the elders; but along with them they seem also to have rejected the other



writings of the Old Testament. It is a mistake to suppose that their religion was a mixture of heathen superstition and Judaism ; it was the rigid observance of the Mosaic law. Like the Jews, they expected the coming of the Messiah : “ I know,” said the woman of Samaria, “ that Messias cometh, who is called Christ ;” but they do not appear, like them, to have entertained the notion of a temporal Messiah. Besides, they do not seem to have been so intolerant and bigoted, and to have entertained that contempt for other nations which the Jews displayed, and which was so great an obstacle to their reception of that religion which knew no difference between Jew and Gentile. Thus the Samaritans were in a measure prepared for the reception of the gospel. The Jewish prejudices against the Christian scheme did not exist among them ; and as worshippers of the true God, and believers in Moses, there were points of connection between them and Christianity which did not exist in the case of the idolatrous Gentiles. The seed also was already sown among them by the short residence of Christ Himself in their country. And thus it happened that the gospel had great success among them, and multitudes of them embraced the Christian faith.

The Samaritans are still settled at Shechem, or, as it is now called, Nablous, a corruption of the Greek name Neapolis. This interesting people are greatly reduced in number : according to Winer, there are not more than thirty families, and according to Hessey about two hundred persons. They still regard Mount Gerizim as the holy mount set apart by Moses, their great lawgiver, to be the peculiar spot for the worship of Jehovah, and to it they direct their prayers. We are informed that they are strict observers of the Sabbath and the Jewish festivals ; that they celebrate the passover with minute attention to the enactments of the Mosaic law ; that they carefully attend to the practices of circumcision and holy washings ; that they are firm believers in the unity and spirituality of God ; that they permit no image of Jehovah to be made ; that they live in the expectation of the Messiah ; and that they are believers in the existence of

angels and of a future state. They still entertain feelings of enmity toward the Jews, and marriages with them are forbidden. Whilst they assert that they are Israelites, the descendants of Joseph, they indignantly deny that they are Jews. (See Winer's *Wörterbuch*, Gieseler's *Church History*, Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, and an article on the Samaritans by Hessey in Smith's *Dictionary*.)

## SECTION XVI.

### MISSION OF PETER AND JOHN TO SAMARIA.—

ACTS VIII. 14–25.

14 But when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John : 15 Who, having come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. 16 For as yet He was fallen upon none of them : only they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. 18 But when Simon saw that, through the imposition of the hands of the apostles, the Spirit was given, he offered them money, 19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. 20 But Peter said to him, Thy silver perish with thee, because thou didst think to purchase the gift of God with money. 21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter : for thy heart is not right before God. 22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee. 23 For I see that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. 24 Then Simon answered, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

25 Then they, after they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and evangelized many villages of the Samaritans.

### CRITICAL NOTES.

Ver. 18. Instead of *θεασάμενος*, found in G, H, Griesbach, Tischendorf, and Lachmann read *ιδών*, found in A, B, C, D, E, *κ*. Tischendorf omits *τὸ ἅγιον* after *Πνεῦμα*, although attested by A, C, D, E, and wanting only in B and *κ*. Ver. 22. Tischendorf and Lachmann read *Κυρίου*, found in A, B, C, D, E, *κ*, instead of *Θεοῦ*, found in G and H. Ver. 25. The imperfects *ὑπέστρεφον*, *εὐηγγελίζοντο*, are better attested than the aorists *ὑπέστρεψαν*, *εὐηγγελίσαντο*, and are preferred by Tischendorf, Lachmann, and Bornemann.

## EXEGETICAL REMARKS.

Ver. 14. Ἀκούσαντες δὲ οἱ ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις ἀπόστολοι—*And the apostles in Jerusalem having heard.* The apostles here act as a body, as they did formerly at the election of the seven (Acts vi. 2). Ὅτι δέδεκται ἡ Σαμάρεια—*that Samaria had received the word of God.* Samaria here is the name of the country, and not of the city. (See note to ver. 5.) The success of the gospel in a particular city of Samaria was regarded as a proof or pledge that the Samaritans in general had embraced the gospel: it showed that there was nothing either in the nature of the gospel or in the nation of the Samaritans which formed an obstacle to their conversion. This was an important step in advance. Hitherto Christianity had been limited to those who were pure Jews; Christians before this were merely a Jewish sect; but now, in the reception of the gospel by the Samaritans, it overpassed the limits of Judaism. Ἀπέστειλαν πρὸς αὐτοὺς Πέτρον καὶ Ἰωάννην—they sent to them Peter and John. Two were sent, as formerly Jesus sent the apostles and the seventy, two by two. So Paul and Barnabas went together to preach the gospel among the Gentiles; and after their separation, Paul chose Silas, and Barnabas took Mark. This is the last time that John is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles.

Different opinions have been entertained regarding the object of the mission of Peter and John to Samaria. Neander supposes that the conversion of the Samaritans was regarded with suspicion by the church at Jerusalem: partly because the event was itself unexpected, and regarded as improbable; and partly by reason of the national distrust felt toward the Samaritans. He also supposes that the Hebrew Christians might be jealous of Philip, because he was a Hellenist.<sup>1</sup> Meyer and De Wette, on the other hand, think that the purpose of their mission was what they actually did after their arrival,—namely, to bestow upon the Samaritan converts the gift of the Holy Ghost. Perhaps the purpose was general—to examine into the state of the church in

<sup>1</sup> Neander's *Planting*, vol. ii. p. 80, Bohm's edition.



Samaria, to supply what was wanting, to extend the hand of fellowship to the newly converted, and to unite them and the Jewish Christians into one church of Christ; in like manner as, when at a later time tidings of the conversion of the Gentiles at Antioch came to the church at Jerusalem, Barnabas was sent to visit the Christians in that city (Acts xi. 22).

Vers. 15, 16. *Ὅπως λάβωσι Πνεῦμα ἅγιον* — *that they might receive the Holy Ghost.* By the Holy Ghost here is not to be understood the ordinary or sanctifying influences of the Spirit. The Samaritans, in the act of believing the gospel, received the Holy Ghost in this sense. Besides, the reception of the Holy Ghost here was accompanied by certain outward manifestations, for it is said that Simon saw that the Holy Ghost was given; nor would Simon have any desire to purchase the sanctifying influences of the Spirit. The miraculous influences of the Spirit, which were manifested by speaking with tongues and prophesyings, are here meant. As Calvin remarks, “Luke speaks not in this place of the common grace of the Spirit, whereby God regenerates us that we may be His children, but of those singular gifts wherewith God would have certain endowed at the beginning of the gospel to beautify the kingdom of Christ.”

But the question arises, Why could not Philip bestow the Holy Ghost? Did the reason of this inability arise from Philip, or from the Samaritans? Neander supposes that the defect lay with the Samaritan converts. He thinks that they were only half Christians: that like as they formerly believed Simon on account of his magical arts, so they now believed Philip on account of his miracles; but that there was no real internal reception of the gospel. The Christ whom Philip preached to them was merely the outward object of their faith, but had not yet passed into their hearts; they had not yet attained to the consciousness of a vital union with Him, or of a personal divine life; in short, they had not yet experienced the indwelling of the Spirit. When Peter and John came, this state of things was rectified; by

their preaching and prayers, the work of Philip was carried on ; and the Samaritans were rendered susceptible for the reception of the Holy Ghost.<sup>1</sup> There is, however, nothing in the context to justify this view of the matter ; no mention of any defect in the faith of the Samaritans. The common opinion appears to be the correct one,—namely, that Philip could not bestow the Holy Ghost, because he was not an apostle. This, though not expressly stated, yet seems implied in the narrative. So Chrysostom and Epiphanius among the Fathers ; and Grotius, Lightfoot, De Wette, Baumgarten, Meyer, Olshausen, and Wordsworth among the moderns.

But another question occurs : Was the bestowal of the Holy Ghost the prerogative of the apostles, so that they only could confer this gift ? This was the opinion of the Fathers. “ Philip,” observes Epiphanius, “ being a deacon, had not authority to give the Holy Ghost by the imposition of hands.” So also the Apostle Paul bestowed the Holy Ghost on his converts (Acts xix. 6). On the other hand, it is objected that Ananias, who was not an apostle, conferred the Holy Ghost on Paul by the imposition of hands (Acts ix. 17). But this case was peculiar, as Ananias was directed to do so by special revelation ; and the independence of Paul, as himself an apostle, required that he should not be indebted for the Holy Ghost to the other apostles. Some (Meyer, Baumgarten) suppose that the reason was, not because the bestowal of the Holy Ghost was an apostolic prerogative, but on account of the great importance of the matter—the reception of the Samaritans into the church of Christ. It was necessary that a step in advance, so important as the progress of Christianity beyond the territories of Judea into Samaria, should not be completed without the direct co-operation of the apostles ; whereas in ordinary cases the Holy Ghost was bestowed by others besides the apostles.<sup>2</sup> The reason here given, if not entirely satisfactory, is certainly ingenious.

<sup>1</sup> Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. p. 60, and vol. ii. p. 81, Bohn's edition.

<sup>2</sup> Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 186.

Ver. 17. *Τότε ἐπέτιθσαν τὰς χεῖρας ἐπ' αὐτούς*—*Then they laid their hands on them.* Concerning the ceremony of imposition of hands, see note to Acts vi. 6. *Καὶ ἐλάβανον Πνεῦμα ἅγιον*—*and they received the Holy Ghost.* They were endowed with the miraculous influences of the Spirit. Although these miraculous influences had been displayed among them by Philip, yet they had not until now been communicated to themselves. As Neander remarks: "Manifestations now followed similar to those on the day of Pentecost; and the believers were thus recognised and attested to be a Christian church, standing in an equal rank with the first church at Jerusalem."<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 18. *Ἴδὼν δὲ ὁ Σίμων*—*And when Simon saw that through the imposition of the hands of the apostles the Holy Ghost was given.* Simon saw it: the effects of the communication therefore were visible, probably in the gestures and inspired utterances of the recipients. It has been generally affirmed that Simon himself did not receive the Holy Ghost, because his moral character rendered him unsusceptible. But it does not decidedly appear that the miraculous influences of the Spirit were limited to those who had already received His ordinary influences. Still, however, as it is said that Simon merely saw that the Holy Ghost was given, it follows that he was a mere spectator, and not a personal recipient. Meyer supposes that his impatient covetousness did not permit him to wait until he himself had an experience similar to the other believers: for the power of the apostolic prayer would have embraced even him, and filled him with the Holy Ghost; and that before his turn came to receive the imposition of hands, he made the nefarious proposal to purchase the Holy Ghost.<sup>2</sup> It is also to be observed, that although Simon had seen the miracles performed by Philip, yet this was the first time he had seen miraculous influences communicated from one person to another: his wonder must have been greatly increased when he saw the Samaritan converts themselves filled with the Holy Ghost.

<sup>1</sup> Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 187.

*Προσένεγκεν αὐτοῖς χρήματα*—*he offered them money.* Simon supposed that the apostles might bestow the power of communicating the Holy Ghost which they possessed upon others; and being utterly incapable of any spiritual discernment, he had the baseness and wickedness to offer them money, provided they would confer this power upon him. He was evidently a perfect stranger to the internal influences of the Spirit, and was only astonished by the external manifestations; and hence he perhaps regarded the apostles as magicians superior both to Philip and himself. The motive of his proposal was evidently a desire to increase his magical arts. He regarded the communication of the Spirit as altogether independent of moral qualifications, susceptible of being transferred and exercised according to pleasure. He thus wished to exalt himself in the world as a superior thaumaturgus, and to bewitch men more effectually than he formerly did by his sorcery (Lechler).

Ver. 20. *Τὸ ἀργύριόν σου σὺν σοὶ εἴη εἰς ἀπώλειαν*—*Thy silver perish with thee.* Ἀργύριον, *silver*; whereas the word *χρήματα*, *monies*, is used in the other clause of the verse and in ver. 18. Literally, “Thy silver with thee be unto destruction.” Various attempts have been made to explain away the seeming imprecation of Peter, as if it were contrary to the spirit of the gospel. Some suppose that it is merely a strong admonition; and that Peter, so far from cursing Simon, exhorts him to repentance and amendment of life. Others think that it is a prediction of what would be the fate of Simon if he did not repent. But the words are evidently an imprecation, to which, doubtless, Peter was divinely moved. Luther renders them in these strong terms: *Dass du verdammet werdest mit deinem Gelde.* The imprecation, however, is modified by the subsequent exhortation to repentance. Simon was not absolutely doomed to destruction; he might avoid the impending danger by timely reformation.

Ver. 21. *Ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τούτῳ*—*in this matter*; literally, “in this word.” Some (Grotius, Neander, Olshausen) suppose that the gospel is intended; that Peter here affirms that Simon had neither part nor lot in the gospel, and con-



sequently in none of its privileges. But this sense is here inappropriate, as there is in the context no mention of the gospel. Lange, still adhering to the literal meaning of the term λόγος, supposes that the inspired utterances of those who had received the Holy Ghost are meant: "in this word"—this speaking with tongues.<sup>1</sup> The term λόγος is sometimes employed for the matter spoken of, the subject of discourse, as in Luke i. 4, Acts xv. 6: hence some (Lechler, Meyer, De Wette) translate the phrase "in this matter," or more exactly, "in this matter about which the discourse is;" that is, in the gift of the Holy Ghost: and this seems to be the correct interpretation. Peter here, then, indignantly repudiates the idea that Simon had any concern whatever either in receiving or in communicating the Holy Ghost.

Ver. 22. *Καὶ δεήθητι τοῦ Κυρίου*—*and pray the Lord*. The Lord here is evidently Christ. If *Κυρίου* be the correct reading, this is one of those many scriptural proofs that it was the custom of the apostolic church to address their prayers to Christ. *Εἰ ἄρα ἀφεθήσεται*—*if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee*. Here evidently a doubt as to Simon obtaining forgiveness is expressed. Meyer supposes that the doubt refers to God's forgiveness; that Simon's sin was so heinous, that it was doubtful, even although he did repent, whether God would forgive him. Some (Hackett, Alford) suppose that Peter here expresses his doubts whether Simon, in desiring to purchase the Holy Ghost, may not have committed the unpardonable sin. Others (De Wette, Bengel, Kuinöl) refer the doubt to Simon's repentance. Simon was so far gone in sin, so sunk in depravity, that his repentance was extremely doubtful. And it is the blessed doctrine of the gospel, that whoever repents, be his sins what they may, will be forgiven. The sin against the Holy Ghost excludes the idea of repentance. Peter here, then, expresses no doubts of God's forgiveness, no limitation of His mercy; but the doubt refers to Simon's repentance, which was hardly to be expected.

Ver. 23. *Εἰς χολὴν πικρίας*—*in the gall of bitterness*.

<sup>1</sup> Lange's *Apostolisches Zeitalter*, vol. ii. p. 107.

The preposition *εἰς*, *into*, occasions difficulty in the translation of this verse. Some (Lechler, Bengel) make it the sign of the predicate: "I perceive that thou art the gall of bitterness." A similar use of *εἰς* occurs elsewhere in the New Testament. (See Matt. xix. 5; 1 Cor. vi. 16; 2 Cor. vi. 18; Winer's *Grammar*, p. 196, English translation.) This meaning, however, is harsh, when applied to the second clause of the sentence—"the bond of iniquity." Others (Stier, Lange) suppose that the words are a prophetic description of what would be Simon's character and conduct if he did not repent: "I perceive that thou wilt yet fall into the gall of bitterness, and into the bond of iniquity." Others suppose that *εἰς* stands for *ἐν*,—a solution never to be resorted to unless where absolutely necessary. The true force of *εἰς* seems to be to represent a falling into a certain state, and a continuance in it: "I perceive that thou hast fallen into sin, and art now in it." So Olshausen, Meyer, De Wette, Alford. *Χολὴν πικρίας*—*gall of bitterness*. Similar to *ἐν χολῇ καὶ πικρίᾳ*, Deut. xxix. 18. So also a somewhat similar expression is used by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews when he speaks of the "root of bitterness" (Heb. xii. 15). Gall here signifies "poison," as, according to the opinion of the ancients, the poison of serpents resided in their gall. (Job xx. 14; Rom. iii. 13). The expression denotes extreme depravity—the corrupting and poisoning influences of sin. Some suppose that there is here a Hebraism for "bitter gall;" but such a supposition is unnecessary, and weakens the expression. *Σύνδεσμον ἀδικίας*—*bond of iniquity*. The same words occur, in a similar sense, in Isa. lviii. 6, *ἀλλὰ λυε πάντα σύνδεσμον ἀδικίας*, "but loose every bond of iniquity." The meaning is, that Simon was wholly enchained by sin—confirmed in the habit of sin. Iniquity is here represented as a chain which bound him. Others (Kuinoel, Ewald, Lechler, Stier) take *συνδεσμός* in the sense of bundle, and suppose that Peter means that Simon's character was, as it were, a bundle, whose separate parts are iniquity. But this is an unusual meaning of the term; and besides, we would have expected *ἀδικίας* to have been in the plural.

It has often been observed that Simon Magus is much more gently dealt with than Ananias, for a crime of similar turpitude. Both were guilty of sinning against the Holy Ghost; Ananias of an attempt to deceive Him, and Simon of a wish to purchase His gifts with money. But whereas Ananias without a moment's respite fell down dead at the apostle's feet; Peter, whilst he severely rebukes Simon, does not exclude him from the hope of forgiveness. But the cases are entirely dissimilar: Ananias was the greater criminal of the two. Simon sinned in comparative ignorance—he himself had not received the Holy Ghost, and he was a stranger to the spiritual nature of religion—he was so deceived by his own magical arts, that he entertained the monstrous opinion that he could purchase the Holy Ghost; whereas Ananias sinned in knowledge—he was a member of the Christian church, and most probably a partaker of the extraordinary influences of the Spirit. Simon sinned openly—there was no disguise, no concealment, about his offer; whereas falsehood constituted the essence of the sin of Ananias. Although it is said that Simon believed Philip, yet he can hardly be called a Christian at all—he was an outsider; whereas Ananias belonged to the Christian community. The judgment inflicted upon Ananias was necessary to preserve the purity of the church at its commencement; whereas there was no such necessity in the case of Simon.

Ver. 24. In this verse there is nothing to intimate that Simon repented of his wickedness, but rather the reverse. Instead of praying for himself, he requests the apostles to pray for him. Instead of deploring his wickedness, he is afraid of the punishment which it might bring upon him. "He confesses his fear of punishment, not horror of guilt" (Bengel). There is nothing here, then, to contradict the traditions of the church, that Simon afterwards became a violent opponent of Christianity; and although these traditions are doubtless mythical, yet it is probable that they sprang from some historical fact.

Scripture is silent regarding the subsequent history of Simon; but he occupies a prominent place in ecclesiastical

tradition. He is there represented as a kind of hero among heretics—the impersonation of the anti-Christian principle; and a far larger space in the legends of the church is allotted to him than we would have expected from the short notice of him in the Acts. Irenæus calls him *magister et progenitor omnium hæreticorum*, “the master and progenitor of all heretics” (*Adv. Hær.* i. 27). Eusebius says that he took the lead in all heresy (*Eccl. Hist.* ii. 13); and the Fathers in general regarded him as the founder of Gnosticism. According to Justin Martyr, he went to Rome accompanied by a female named Helena, formerly a prostitute of Tyre, whom he called his *ἐννοια*, or divine intelligence. Here he was revered as a god, and had a statue erected to his honour on an island in the Tiber, between the two bridges, with the inscription “*Simoni Deo Sancti*” (Justin, *Apol.* i. 26; Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* ii. 13). According to Eusebius, he again in the reign of Claudius Cæsar encountered Peter at Rome, who confounded him by his prayers and miracles (*Hist. Eccl.* ii. 14). His death is variously described. According to Hippolytus, he was buried alive at his own request, saying that he would rise again on the third day (*Adv. Hær.* vi. 20). According to Arnobius, Cyril of Jerusalem, and *Constitut. Apost.* (ii. 14, vi. 9), he met his death at Rome in an encounter with Peter: he raised himself in the air by the aid of evil spirits; but in answer to the prayers of Peter, he fell and broke his bones, and out of vexation committed suicide.

The remark of Justin Martyr, that Simon had a statue erected to his honour at Rome on an island in the Tiber, with the inscription “*Simoni Deo Sancto*,” has been explained in a very remarkable manner. In the year 1574 a stone was dug up at the spot described by Justin, with the inscription “*Semoni Sanco Deo Fidio Sacrum*,”—an inscription which applies to the Sabine god Semo-Sancus—the Sabine Hercules. Hence, as it is in itself improbable that Simon, however successful as a magician, would ever be admitted among the *deos Romanos*; and also equally improbable that Justin Martyr, in an apology written at Rome, would state what he did not see; taking this in connection with the discovery of



the statue at the very place described, it follows as a reasonable inference, that Justin must have confounded the god Semo-Sancus with Simon Magus.<sup>1</sup>

It is impossible to say what amount of truth lies at the root of these legends: they can hardly be mere unfounded fables. It is not unlikely that Simon, being repelled by Peter, proceeded from bad to worse; that he continued his magical arts, and became a violent opponent of Christianity. There was a sect which continued until the time of Origen, known by the name of the Simonians, who claimed Simon Magus as their founder. Neander informs us that they accommodated themselves sometimes to paganism, sometimes to Judaism, or to the religious opinions of the Samaritans, and sometimes to Christianity: they appear sometimes to have been rigid ascetics, and at other times wild scoffers of all moral law. Simon Magus was their Christ. It was one of the numerous gnostic sects by whom Christianity was so dreadfully corrupted and distorted. We cannot suppose that Simon himself was the founder of the sect, but rather that it sprung up at a later period. Others, again, think that Simon Magus, and Simon the founder of the sect of the Simonians, were different persons, and that they were by mistake confounded together.<sup>2</sup>

Ver. 25. *Ἐπέστρεφον, εὐηγγελίζοντο*—*were returning, were preaching the gospel*. The imperfects of the verbs, according to the best attested reading, being employed instead of the aorists, imply that the apostles devoted some time to the publication of the gospel. They did not go directly to Jerusalem, but employed themselves in the villages of Samaria preaching the gospel. It has been well observed, that the same John who once wished fire to come down from heaven to consume the Samaritans, now preached to them the gospel

<sup>1</sup> Neander's *Church History*, vol. ii. p. 123, note, Bohn's edition; Gieseler's *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. i. p. 49, Clark's translation; Renan's *Les Apôtres*, ch. xv.

<sup>2</sup> For an account of the Simonians, see Neander's *Church History*, vol. ii. pp. 122, 123; Gieseler's *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. i. pp. 49, 50; and Mosheim's *Church History*, vol. i. pp. 140–143, Maclaine's translation.

of peace. He had since that time learned much in the school of Christ: then he knew not what spirit he was of, but now he was actuated by the Holy Spirit. It was a different kind of fire which he now prayed might descend from heaven upon the Samaritans—the fire of the Holy Ghost.

## SECTION XVII.

### CONVERSION OF THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH.—Acts viii. 26–40.

26 But an angel of the Lord spake to Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south, to the way that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza, which is desert. 27 And he arose and went: and, behold, an Ethiopian, a eunuch and a distinguished officer of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was over all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, 28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot, and read the prophet Isaiah. 29 Then the Spirit said to Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. 30 And Philip having run up, heard him read the prophet Isaiah, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? 31 And he said, How can I, except some man shall guide me? And he desired Philip to come up and sit with him. 32 The passage of Scripture which he read was this: He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb dumb before its shearer, so He opens not His mouth: 33 In His humiliation His judgment was taken away: and who shall declare His generation? because His life is taken from the earth. 34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaks the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? 35 Then Philip, opening his mouth, and beginning from this scripture, preached to him Jesus. 36 And as they went along the road, they came to a certain water: and the eunuch said, Behold, here is water; what hinders me to be baptized? 37, 38 And he commanded the chariot to halt: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. 39 And when they were come out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, and the eunuch saw him no more: for he went on his way rejoicing. 40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and journeying on, he evangelized all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.

#### CRITICAL NOTES.

Ver. 37. This verse, *Εἶπε δὲ ὁ Φίλιππος· Εἰ πιστεύεις ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας, ἔξεστιν. Ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ εἶπε· Πιστεύω τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ εἶναι τὸν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν*, is contained in only

one uncial MS., E, whilst it is wanting in A, B, C, G, H,  $\kappa$ : there is a hiatus in D. It is accordingly rejected by our best biblical critics. Bornemann alone hesitates. The interpolation, if it be such, however, is very old, being found in the writings of Irenæus (*Adv. Hær.* iii. 8), and in the Syriac, Vulgate, and Armenian versions. It is supposed to have been added from dogmatic reasons, because a confession of faith by the eunuch was judged to be necessary before his baptism.

#### EXEGETICAL REMARKS.

Ver. 26. *Ἀγγελος Κυρίου*—*an angel of the Lord*; not, as in our version, “the angel of the Lord,”—an expression which does not occur in the Acts. *Ἐλάλησεν πρὸς Φίλιππον*—*spoke to Philip*. Olshausen supposes that merely an internal intimation is meant, and that the phrase is similar to “the Spirit of the Lord” in ver. 29. But the difference of expression rather intimates that they are dissimilar. Others (Heinrichs, Kuinzel) suppose that the angel appeared to Philip in a dream; and for this they appeal to the word *ἀνάστηθι*, “arise.” But this word in itself does not suggest the idea of arising from sleep, but is merely a call to action; and in the context there is no intimation of a vision or dream. Luke, then, here relates the actual appearance of an angel to Philip. So Meyer, De Wette, Lechler. *Ἀνάστηθι καὶ πορεύου κατὰ μεσημβρίαν . . . Γάζαν*—*Arise, and go toward the south, to the way that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza*. Zeller infers from these words that Philip returned with the apostles to Jerusalem, and that he went from that city to Gaza.<sup>1</sup> But such an opinion is unnecessary and improbable. It was necessary to go southward from Samaria, in order to join the road from Jerusalem to Gaza. The mention of the return of Peter and John to Jerusalem seems to intimate that Philip did not return, but remained behind.

*Γάζαν*—*Gaza*. This city is situated about two miles from the Mediterranean, at the southern extremity of Palestine,

<sup>1</sup> Zeller's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 175.



distant about sixty miles from Jerusalem to the south-west. It is one of the oldest cities in the world, being mentioned in Gen. x. 19. Originally it formed part of the tribe of Judah; but it was long before the Israelites obtained possession of it. The Philistines, their great enemies, made it their capital. Although conquered by David, it soon recovered its freedom, and is mentioned as an independent city of the Philistines as late as the time of Hezekiah (2 Kings xviii. 8). After the captivity it became of considerable importance in a military point of view, being the last town of Palestine on the frontier of Egypt, and consequently the key to Egypt and Syria. It was taken after a siege of five months by Alexander the Great, who partially destroyed it (Plutarch's *Alexander*; Strabo, xvi. 2. 30). Under the Syrian kings it revived, but was again taken and completely destroyed by King Alexander Jannæus about 96 years before Christ (Joseph. *Ant.* xiii. 13. 3). The Roman general Gabinius (B.C. 58) rebuilt it; and by reason of the advantage of its situation, it soon became a flourishing city. At a later period it was assigned by Augustus to Herod the Great as part of his kingdom, and after his death it was incorporated into the province of Syria. At the time referred to in the Acts, Gaza was a city of some consequence. Pomponius Mela, who lived in the time of Claudius, calls it *ingens urbs et munita admodum*. Shortly after this, however, it was partially destroyed by the Jews at the commencement of the Jewish war (Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* ii. 18. 1). It was an important city in the time of the Crusaders, and was finally taken by Saladin. At present, Gaza is a considerable town with a population of about 15,000, known by the name of Ghuzzeh, and much frequented by merchants going between Syria and Egypt.<sup>1</sup>

*Αὕτη ἐστὶν ἔρημος*—*which is desert*. It has been disputed whether these words apply to the city of Gaza or to the way to it; and whether they form part of the address of the angel, or are a note added by the historian. Many commentators refer the words to Gaza, but among those who

<sup>1</sup> See Winer's *biblisches Wörterbuch*—Gaza.

do so there is a variety of opinion. Some (Hug, Schneckenburger, Lekebusch, Olshausen) suppose that the description refers to the destruction of the city during the Jewish war; and that Luke mentions the deserted state of Gaza on account of its recent occurrence. But, not to mention that it is doubtful, if the Acts was of so late a date, such a remark is unsuitable, because it could have no bearing on the narrative before us, which relates not to the city, but to the road to it, as the scene of the occurrence. Others (Pearson, Humphry) refer the epithet to old Gaza, and suppose that the new town was built at some distance from it. According to Strabo, old Gaza was destroyed by Alexander the Great, and remained deserted (*καὶ μένουσα ἔρημος*: *Strabo*, xvi. 2. 30). They accordingly suppose the clause, "which is desert," to be a parenthesis inserted by Luke to explain which Gaza was meant. The statement of Strabo, however, has been disputed; and indeed the words which are quoted from him are regarded as an interpolation, as they are wanting in several manuscripts of his works. Unless the distance between the two Gazas, the old and the new, was considerable, it does not appear what connection the remark has with the narrative. Others (Wolf, Krebs) translate the word *ἔρημος* "unfortified." This, however, is a doubtful meaning of the term, has no connection with the narrative, and besides would express what was probably not the fact: on the contrary, Pomponius Mela asserts that Gaza was fortified. Others (Heinrichs, Kuinöl) suppose that the remark is a gloss of some commentator, which was afterwards inserted in the text. But this supposition is at variance with the combined testimony of all mss. and versions, and is therefore wholly inadmissible.

The term *ἔρημος*, then, applies to the way—"which way is desert." So Beza, Winer, Ewald, Baumgarten, Lechler, Wieseler, Meyer, Stier. This gives a good sense; it served to designate the particular road which Philip should take, and on which he should meet the Ethiopian eunuch. There were several roads leading from Jerusalem to Gaza. Besides the most frequented at the present day, the road by Ramleh, Dr. Robinson mentions two others,—the one down the great

Wady es-Surar by Bethshemesh, and the other through Wady el-Musurr to Eleutheropolis, and thence to Gaza by a more southern tract. The last-named route, as being through a district thinly inhabited, he supposes to have been the particular way on which Philip met with the eunuch. But besides these, there appears to have been in ancient times another road, which is with still greater probability identified with the road in the narrative. Von Raumer shows that there was a road from Jerusalem to Gaza by the way of Bethlehem and Bethzur to Hebron, and which, after leaving Hebron, led through a region actually called a desert (Luke i. 80).<sup>1</sup> The term desert here is employed, as elsewhere in Scripture, to denote a barren district destitute of dwellings. The words, then, "which is desert," are to be considered as the words of the angel pointing out to Philip the particular road which he should take,—namely, that which was then known by the name of the desert road, or which led through the desert of Judea. This is to be regarded as the sole object of the remark. Other reasons are mere groundless suppositions: as that Philip was directed to this desert road, that there might be no fear of an attack from the Jews (Chrysostom); or because the place was fitting for undisturbed communication (Baumgarten, Wieseler). Lange strangely takes the word in a spiritual sense—that Philip was sent to a district spiritually barren, "which is waste;" that is, must now be spiritually prepared and made.<sup>2</sup>

Ver. 27. *Καὶ ἰδὸν ἀνὴρ Αἰθίοψ*—*And behold an Ethiopian.* Ethiopia was the name used for those lands which lay south of Egypt, including the modern countries of Nubia, Cordofan, and Northern Abyssinia. Here the northern part of this district, anciently called Meroë, is meant, for of this district Candace was queen. *Εὐνοῦχος*—*a eunuch.* Such persons were employed in Eastern courts as chamberlains, keepers of the harem, etc. The term is occasionally used to denote an officer of state—a chamberlain; and so some (Kuinoel, Olshausen, Kitto) suppose that it is here used. But the

<sup>1</sup> Baumgarten's *Church History*, vol. i. pp. 190–192.

<sup>2</sup> Lange's *Apostolisches Zeitalter*, p. 109.

designation *δυνάστης* which follows denotes his rank, and thus renders such a meaning of *εὐνοῦχος* tautological. *Δυνάστης*—a distinguished officer. This word is generally used to denote a potentate or prince; but here it must be limited to denote one high in authority under a prince.

*Κανδάκης, βασιλίσσης Αἰθιόπων*—of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This, we learn from heathen authors, was the common name of the queens of Meroë, the northern part of Ethiopia. Strabo and Dio Cassius inform us that a powerful queen of Ethiopia of this name, whose capital was Napata, made war against Petronius, the Roman governor of Egypt, in the reign of Augustus (Strabo, xvii. 1. 54, 55; Dio Cass. liv. 5).<sup>1</sup> Pliny, who lived in the reign of Titus, tells us that in his time Candace was the queen of Meroë, and he adds that for many years this had been the name of their queens (Plin. *Hist. Nat.* vi. 35); and Eusebius informs us that even in his time “the custom still prevailed in Ethiopia to be governed by queens” (Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* ii. 1). It would appear from the statement of Pliny that Candace was not the particular name of this individual queen, but a titular distinction for the queens of Meroë, similar to that of Pharaoh and Ptolemy in Egypt, and Cæsar in Rome.

*Ὃς ἦν ἐπὶ πάσης τῆς γάζης αὐτῆς*—who was over all her treasure. *Γάζα*, treasure, taken from the Persian: *pecuniam regiam gazam Persæ vocant* (Qu. Curt. iii. 13. 5). *Ὃς ἐληλύθει προσκυνήσων εἰς Ἰ.*—who had come to Jerusalem to worship. It is disputed whether the Ethiopian eunuch was a Jew, an uncircumcised Gentile, or a Jewish proselyte. Olshausen supposes that he was a Jew, and that he was called an Ethiopian only from his place of residence.<sup>2</sup> Jews, as we elsewhere learn, were numerous in Ethiopia. The reason, however, which Olshausen assigns, “because proselytes were seldom acquainted with the Hebrew tongue,” is singularly weak; for the eunuch might read the prophecy of Isaiah from the Greek translation. The natural meaning of *Αἰθίοψ* is, that it denotes the nation to which he belonged—

<sup>1</sup> See Merivale's *History of the Romans*, vol. iv. 158.

<sup>2</sup> Olshausen on the *Gospels and Acts*, vol. iv. p. 341.



that the eunuch was actually an Ethiopian. Meyer and De Wette suppose that he was an uncircumcised heathen—a so-called proselyte of the gate—a worshipper of the true God, but who had not been incorporated among the Jews by the rite of circumcision.<sup>1</sup> The reason they assign for this is, because eunuchs were prohibited from approaching the congregation of the Lord (Deut. xxiii. 1). According to this view, the Ethiopian eunuch, and not Cornelius, was the first convert from the Gentile world. So also Eusebius designates him as the first among the Gentiles (πρῶτος ἐξ ἐθνῶν) who was converted (*Hist. Eccl.* ii. 1). The reason, however, assigned (Deut. xxiii. 1) is insufficient: there was nothing to prevent the eunuch becoming a Jewish proselyte, and being admitted to the same religious privileges with those Jews who were in a similar condition. The Acts of the Apostles, although it does not directly assert, yet seems strongly to intimate, that Cornelius was the first Gentile convert (Acts xv. 7). The great journey of the eunuch from Ethiopia to Jerusalem in order to worship, as well as his speedy reception into the Christian church, are better explained on the supposition that he was a full Jewish proselyte, than that he was merely a devout Gentile like Cornelius.

Ver. 28. Ἦν ὑποστρέφων—*was returning*. The Ethiopian eunuch, on his return from Jerusalem, had to pass through Gaza in order to get to Egypt. Ἀνεγίνωσκειν τὸν προφήτην Ἠσαΐαν—*read the prophet Isaiah*. He probably read from the Septuagint. This translation was in general use out of Palestine; and the quotation which follows is taken from it. In all probability, he had heard when at Jerusalem of the wonderful events connected with the life and death of Jesus, and of the existence of a numerous party who believed that He was the Messiah of the Jews. Of this he could not possibly be entirely ignorant; for the disciples were numerous in Jerusalem, and had attracted much attention. This may have led to his study of Isaiah, the most evangelical of the prophets, and to this particular passage of his prophecy, where the sufferings of the Messiah are so

<sup>1</sup> Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 192.

clearly described. According to this supposition, he was examining the prophecies with reference to the question whether Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah—whether the prophet Isaiah described His sufferings or those of some other man.

Vers. 29–31. *Εἶπεν δὲ τὸ Πνεῦμα—then the Spirit said.* The first of those intimations of the Holy Spirit which were afterwards of frequent occurrence. The Spirit spoke by means of an internal intimation. *Ἀράγε γινώσκεις ἃ ἀναγινώσκεις—Understandest thou what thou readest?* Philip heard him read the prophet Isaiah, but was doubtful whether he understood its Messianic reference. *Πῶς γὰρ ἂν δυναίμην—How can I, except some man should guide me?* The fulfilment is the key to the interpretation of the prophecy. Now, although the Ethiopian eunuch must have heard something of Jesus in Jerusalem, yet he was in a great measure ignorant of His life and death, and therefore wanted this key of interpretation; and hence he requests Philip to explain the passage to him.

Vers. 32, 33. This passage is taken almost verbatim from the Septuagint of Isa. liii. 7, 8: the only differences are, that in the Acts *αὐτοῦ* is inserted after *ταπεινώσει*, and *δέ* before *γενεὰν*. The words, however, differ somewhat from the original Hebrew, where, instead of “In His humiliation, His judgment was taken away,” we read, “He was taken from prison and from judgment.”

Ver. 33. *Ἐν τῇ ταπεινώσει αὐτοῦ ἡ κρίσις αὐτοῦ ἦρθη—In His humiliation His judgment was taken away.* This difficult verse has been variously interpreted. The chief difficulty lies in the meaning of the words, “His judgment was taken away.” Some (Bengel, Lechler) render them, “The judgment pronounced on Him by His enemies was taken away—cancelled or set aside by God.” Others (Meyer, Robinson) render them, “His judgment, the punishment inflicted upon Him by His enemies, was taken away—removed, ended, or finished by His death.” Humphry supposes that the judicial power of the Messiah as Son of God is here alluded to: “In His state of humiliation, while He was in this world, His

judicial power was taken away—He did not appear as the Divine Judge of men.” On the whole, the popular meaning is to be preferred as the most simple and natural: “His judgment—the judgment due to Him—His rights of justice—were withheld by His enemies.” Jesus appeared in a form so humble, a man so poor and insignificant, that Pilate, though convinced of His innocence, thought it not worth while to hazard anything to preserve His life.

*Τὴν δὲ γενεὰν αὐτοῦ τίς διηγήσεται*—and who shall declare His generation? Different interpretations have also been given of this clause. The Fathers in general referred it to the mystery of the Messiah’s deity: Who shall declare His generation—His Divine Sonship?—a meaning approved by Wordsworth, but which ill suits the connection with the following clause. Others (Luther, Calvin, Beza, Vitranga, Bengel, Hengstenberg) refer the words to the duration of His kingdom and His spiritual seed; as if the prophet had said, Who shall declare the duration of His reign, or count the number of His spiritual offspring? *Γενεά* may certainly signify posterity, and may thus refer to the spiritual offspring of the Messiah; but then such a meaning does not well suit the following clause, “for His life is taken from the earth:” at least the connection is remote. Besides, such an interpretation would be tautological; for the prophet in a subsequent verse expresses this idea in clearer terms: “He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days” (Isa. liii. 10). Bishop Lowth renders the passage, “His manner of life who shall declare?” He informs us that it was the custom, before any one was punished for a capital offence among the Jews, to make the following proclamation: “Whoever knows anything of the innocence of this man, let him come and declare it.” And he supposes that when such a proclamation was made in the case of Christ, no one stood up in His defence. But such a meaning is inadmissible, as *γενεά* does not signify manner of life. Others (Meyer, De Wette, Lechler, Robinson, Alford) render the passage: “Who shall declare His generation?”—that is, set forth the wickedness of His contemporaries? This meaning certainly best suits the context:

“For”—as a proof and demonstration of this indescribable wickedness—“His life was taken from the earth,” *i.e.* He was put to death.

Ver. 34. *Περὶ τίνος ὁ προφήτης λέγει τοῦτο ; περὶ ἑαυτοῦ, ἢ περὶ ἑτέρου τινός*—*Of whom speaks the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?* The eunuch, in studying the prophecy with reference to Jesus, saw a possible objection: that the words might not be a prediction, but the historical statement of a fact; and that Isaiah might be speaking of himself either as an individual, or as the representative of the prophetic class. Perhaps the opinion that Isaiah was the person spoken of might have been advanced by the Jews in Jerusalem in their arguments with the disciples of Jesus, and the eunuch might have heard the passage so expounded.

Ver. 35. *Εὐηγγελίστατο αὐτῷ τὸν Ἰησοῦν*—*He preached to him Jesus.* Philip showed the correspondence between the life and death of Jesus and the predictions of the prophet, and thus proved from this and other prophecies that Jesus was the Messiah whom the Jews expected. The Messianic nature of this prophecy has been generally admitted by all Christians; it is one of the strongholds of Christianity; indeed, when reading this fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, we seem rather to be reading a history of the past than a prediction of the future, so clear is the correspondence between the prophecy and the history of Jesus. In these later chapters of Isaiah there is a description of “the servant of the Lord;” and it is of him that the prophet speaks. Modern Jews have referred the prediction to various individuals—to Hezekiah, to the prophet Isaiah himself, and to Jeremiah; but all these applications are inadmissible: there is little or no correspondence between the prophecy and its supposed fulfilment in any of these persons. More plausible is the opinion, that by “the servant of the Lord” Israel collectively is meant. But here also the application is forced; and even although there may be a reference to Israel, yet it can only be in a subordinate sense, as a type of the Messiah. Accordingly several Jewish writers, such as Rabbi Solomon Jarchi, and Rabbi Isaac Abrabanel, admit that the Messiah



is here spoken of, although they are either so blind or so prejudiced as not to draw the inference that Jesus of Nazareth is that Messiah.<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 36.—*Ἦλθον ἐπὶ τι ὕδωρ*—*they came to a certain water.* As the particular road along which Philip and the eunuch travelled is a matter of conjecture, so the water, the fountain or brook in which he was baptized, must remain undetermined. Tradition fixes on a fountain near Bethsur, on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza, which passes by Hebron, and which, as we have already seen, was probably the way along which the eunuch was journeying. Both Eusebius and Jerome concur in this tradition. The latter states: “Bethsur, now called Bethsoron, is a village on the road from Ælia (Jerusalem) to Hebron, at the twentieth milestone, near which there is a fountain, which issues at the base of the mountain, and is absorbed by the same ground in which it rises; and the Acts of the Apostles relates that here the eunuch of Candace was baptized by Philip”<sup>2</sup> (Jerome, *de loc. Heb. Bethsur*). The site of this fountain has been identified near a village called Betur, beside which are the ruins of a Christian church. It is, however, improbable that this was the spot, as Bethsur is situated before that part of the road is reached which can with any propriety be called desert. In the age of the Crusaders, Ain Haniyeh, five miles south-west of Jerusalem, was fixed upon as the place of the baptism, where there is still a fountain, known by the name of St. Philip’s fountain. Dr. Robinson supposes that the baptism took place in a brook near Tell el-Hasy, on the road from Beit Jibrin to Gaza. “When,” he observes, “we were at Tell el-Hasy, and saw the water standing along the bottom of the adjacent wady, we could not but remark the coincidence of several circumstances with the account of the eunuch’s baptism. This water is on the most direct route from Beit Jibrin to Gaza, on the most southern road from Jerusalem, and in the midst of a country now desert, that is, without villages or fixed habitations.”

<sup>1</sup> See Du Veil on the *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 210.

<sup>2</sup> Pearson’s *Lectures on the Acts*.

Vers. 37, 38. For ver. 37, see Critical Note. *Εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ*—into the water. It is generally supposed that these words are in favour of baptism by immersion. But whatever was the practice in apostolic times, the words do not necessarily bear this meaning: they merely imply that Philip and the eunuch went into the water for the purpose of baptism; but they state nothing as to the mode of its administration.

Ver. 39. The Alexandrine MS. (A<sup>2</sup>, but according to Tischendorf corrected by the original scribe) after *ὑδατος* reads, *Πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐπέπεσεν ἐπὶ τὸν εὐνοῦχον, ἄγγελος δὲ Κυρίου*, etc.—“The Holy Ghost fell upon the eunuch, but the angel of the Lord caught away Philip.” This reading is also found in seven cursive MSS., two versions, and Jerome. It is curious, but doubtless spurious, and has never been adopted by any eminent critic. *Πνεῦμα Κυρίου ἤρπασε τὸν Φίλιππον*—the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip. Some (Olshausen, Hackett) suppose that these words merely intimate that Philip felt himself urged by a divine impulse to depart, but not that the mode of his departure was miraculous in any other respect.<sup>1</sup> But the impression which the narrative leaves upon the mind, the forcible word *ἤρπασε*, the eunuch seeing him no more, and Philip being found at Azotus, upwards of thirty miles distant, is, that the removal was miraculous, although its mode and nature are not described. So Meyer, De Wette, Bengel, Alford, Wordsworth. Similar miraculous removals appear to have happened in the case of Elijah (1 Kings xviii. 12; 2 Kings ii. 16). The same verb occurs in the description of the ecstasy of Paul (2 Cor. xii. 2, 4). Zeller infers, from the account of the miraculous nature of Philip’s removal, that the whole narrative is mythical, and that the only historical truth in the account is, that a certain Ethiopian nobleman was converted to Christianity.<sup>2</sup> Such attempts to explain away the miraculous by mere unsupported assertions cannot be met with arguments. If the miraculous be denied, then certainly the whole narrative is mythical. But if once admitted, then our

<sup>1</sup> Hackett on the Acts, p. 158.

<sup>2</sup> Zeller’s *Apostelgeschichte*, pp. 175, 176.

sole duty is to find out the true meaning of the passage, and not to receive some miracles and reject others on mere arbitrary considerations. *Ἐπορεύετο γὰρ τὴν ὁδὸν αὐτοῦ χαίρων*—*for he went on his way rejoicing*. *Γάρ*—*for*, not *and*, as in our version. A reason is here given: "The eunuch saw him no more, because he went on his way rejoicing." The miraculous removal of Philip was an attestation to the eunuch of Philip's teaching, and a confirmation of his faith.

Tradition states that this eunuch, whose name is given as Indich, preached the gospel in his own country after his return; that queen Candace was converted; and that a flourishing church was established in Ethiopia (Nicephorus, ii. 6). Eusebius states, that "on his return to his country he proclaimed the knowledge of God, and the salutary abode of our Saviour among men" (*Hist. Eccl.* ii. 1); and Jerome writes, "The eunuch was sent as an apostle to the nations of the Ethiopians" (Jerome on Isa. liii.). These traditions are probably erroneous; at least history does not record any traces of Christianity among the Ethiopians until the fourth century, when their conversion was effected by Frumentius, in the reign of Constantine.

Ver. 40. *Εἰς Ἀζωτον*—*at Azotus*. The force of the preposition *εἰς* is, that Philip was carried away by the Spirit until he came to Azotus. Azotus, or Ashdod, was one of the five chief cities of the Philistines. It was about thirty miles from Gaza, and lay midway between it and Joppa, about three miles distant from the Mediterranean. Although allotted to the tribe of Judah, yet it continued to maintain itself as a Philistine city until the time of Nehemiah (*Neh.* xiii. 23, 24). It is said to have sustained a siege of twenty-nine years by Psammetichus king of Egypt, by whom it was at length taken (*Herod.* ii. 157). Afterwards it was destroyed by Jonathan Maccabæus, but rebuilt by the proconsul Gabinius. It belonged to the kingdom of Herod the Great, who bequeathed it to his sister Salome. It is now an insignificant village, and still retains its ancient name, Esdud. *Εὐηγγελίζετο τὰς πόλεις πάσας*—*he evangelized all the cities*. In journeying from Azotus to Cæsarea, Philip would pass

through the populous plain of Saron, and would preach the gospel in Lydda, Joppa, and other cities. *Ἔως τοῦ ἐλθεῖν αὐτὸν εἰς Καισάρειαν*—until he came to Cæsarea. Lekebusch supposes that this statement is made by anticipation, and that Philip spent some time in preaching the gospel before he came to Cæsarea; and that this was the reason why there is no notice of him in the narrative of the conversion of Cornelius.<sup>1</sup> Twenty years after this, mention is made of Philip as still resident in Cæsarea. When Paul was on his last journey to Jerusalem, we read that when he and his company came to Cæsarea, they entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and abode with him (Acts xxi. 8). In the traditions of the church, Philip the deacon is confounded with Philip the apostle (Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 31). He is said to have died bishop of Tralles.

Cæsarea, called Cæsarea Augustus—*Καισαρεία Σεβαστή*—was situated on the shores of the Mediterranean, about seventy miles distant from Jerusalem. It was also called Cæsarea Palestinæ, and Cæsarea Stratonis. In the time of Strabo it was known by the name of the Tower of Strato, and was merely a station for vessels (Strabo, xvi. 2. 27). Herod the Great, however, in the course of ten years built a magnificent city, and named it, in honour of Augustus, Cæsarea. Josephus calls it a city of palaces. “Herod,” he says, “built it all with white stone, adorned it with the most splendid palaces, and, what was the greatest and the most laborious work of all, with a harbour which was at all times free from the waves of the sea” (*Ant.* xv. 9. 6; *Bell. Jud.* i. 21. 5). The harbour, he tells us, was equal in size to the celebrated Piræus at Athens. After the death of Herod, and when Judea was made a part of the Roman empire, Cæsarea became the residence of the Roman procurators. Here Pontius Pilate, Felix, and Festus held their courts. Here were the headquarters of the Roman troops. Hence it was called by Tacitus the capital of Judea (*caput Judææ*, Tac. *Hist.* ii. 79). Although the Jews were numerous, yet

<sup>1</sup> Lekebusch's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 101.



the inhabitants were chiefly Gentiles, and Greek was the language spoken. At the commencement of the Jewish war, all the Jews resident in Cæsarea to the number of twenty thousand were killed ; so that, in the emphatic words of the Jewish historian, in one hour Cæsarea was emptied of its Jewish inhabitants (*Bell. Jud.* ii. 18. 1). Here Vespasian was declared emperor ; and in consequence of the fidelity of the city, he raised it to the dignity of a Roman colony, and bestowed upon it many privileges.<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Cæsarea occurs seldom in history : it appears to have fallen gradually into decay and obscurity. Eusebius, the father of ecclesiastical history, was born there, and resided as bishop. It is occasionally mentioned in the wars of the Crusades. Cæsarea is now a large heap of ruins, and its stones are used to build and repair the neighbouring towns of Syria ; whilst the old name Kaisariyeh still lingers to mark the spot where the proud metropolis of Roman Judea stood, and to teach a lesson of the vanity of earthly greatness. But in the apostolic age Cæsarea was at the height of its splendour—the city of palaces, the seat of Roman government and law, and the rival of Jerusalem as the capital of Judea.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The history of Cæsarea is thus summed up by Pliny : *Stratonis turris, eadem Cæsarea, ab Herode rege condita : nunc Colonia, prima Flavia, a Vespasiano Imperatore deducta* (v. 14).

<sup>2</sup> Winer's *biblisches Wörterbuch* ; Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible* ; Conybeare and Howson's *Travels of St. Paul*.

## SECTION XVIII.

### CONVERSION OF PAUL.—ACTS IX. 1-19.

1 And Saul, yet breathing threatening and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, 2 And desired of him letters to Damâscus to the synagogues, that if he should find any who were of the way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. 3 And it came to pass, as he journeyed, that he drew near Damascus; and suddenly there flashed around him a light from heaven: 4 And having fallen to the earth, he heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5 And he said, Who art Thou, Lord? And He replied, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: 6 But arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. 7 And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but seeing no one. 8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing: and they, leading him by the hand, brought him to Damascus. 9 And he was three days not seeing, and neither did eat nor drink.

10 Now there was a certain disciple in Damascus, named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. 11 And the Lord said to him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus: for, behold, he prays, 12 And has seen a man named Ananias coming in, and laying his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. 13 And Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many concerning this man, how much evil he did to Thy saints at Jerusalem: 14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke Thy name. 15 But the Lord said to him, Go: because he is to me a chosen vessel, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 For I shall show him how much he must suffer for my name's sake. 17 And Ananias went, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord sent me, even Jesus, who appeared to thee on the way as thou camest, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. 18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it were scales; and he received sight, and arose, and was baptized. 19 And having received food, he was strengthened.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

Ver. 5. The words *Κύριος εἶπεν* are found only in G, H, but are wanting in A, B, C, and are rejected by Lachmann and Tischendorf; *κ* has *ὁ δὲ εἶπεν*. Vers. 5, 6. After *διώκεις* the *textus receptus* has *σκληρόν σοι πρὸς κέντρα λακτίζειν. Τρέμων τε καὶ θαμβῶν εἶπε Κύριε, τί με θέλεις ποιῆσαι; Καὶ ὁ Κύριος πρὸς αὐτόν*. But no Greek MS. whatever has been found which contains these words. E has only the first five words. They are therefore omitted by all recent critics. Ver. 8. *Οὐδένα* is found in C, E, G, H; whereas A, B, and *κ* read *οὐδέν*: the latter reading has been preferred by Tischendorf, Lachmann, and Meyer. Ver. 12. The words *ἐν ὁράματι* before *ἄνδρα*, found in this order in E, G, H, and in B and C before *εἶδεν*, are wanting in A and *κ*, and are rejected by Lachmann and Tischendorf. Ver. 18. *Παραχρήμα* is found in E, G, but omitted in A, B, C, H, *κ*, and is rejected by later critics.

## EXEGETICAL REMARKS.

Next to the narrative of the effusion of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, this is the most important section of the Acts of the Apostles. We have in it the account of the conversion of the greatest defender and the most successful missionary of the Christian faith; a man who, beyond all the other apostles, has indelibly impressed his name and spirit upon Christianity, and especially upon Protestantism; and who has thus of all men exerted the mightiest influence upon the world. Besides numerous allusions to the event in the epistles of Paul, we have three separate accounts of it in the Acts: the first is the narrative of Luke, now under consideration; the second is contained in the speech of Paul before the Jewish multitude at Jerusalem (Acts xxii. 4–16); and the third forms part of his defence before King Agrippa (Acts xxvi. 12–18). These accounts agree in the principal particulars, but differ in subordinate details; thus affording

that mark of internal credibility—substantial truth combined with circumstantial variety ; and this is the case whether the differences between the accounts be capable or incapable of reconciliation. They also mutually supply what is wanting in each other, and complete the history. From Acts xxii. we learn that the appearance occurred at noon ; and from Acts xxvi., that the light which shone down from heaven surpassed the sun in brightness. And by comparing the three accounts together, we find that whereas the phenomenon affected both Paul and his companions, the impression which it made upon Paul was clear and definite, whilst the impression which it made upon his companions was indistinct : the voice from heaven addressed the former, but not the latter.

Ver. 1. 'Ο δὲ Σαῦλος ἔτι ἐμπνέων . . . Κυρίου—*And Saul, yet breathing threatening and murder against the disciples of the Lord.* The last account which we had of Paul was that he was consenting to the death of Stephen, and made havoc of the church ; we are now told that his persecuting zeal, instead of diminishing by time, increased. It must have increased his rage to find that the dispersion of the Christians served to the diffusion of their opinions ; to hear that those whom he had been instrumental in driving from Jerusalem were so successful in preaching the religion he was so eager to root out. 'Εμπνέων, a stronger term than πνέων. Προσελθὼν τῷ ἀρχιερεῖ—*having gone to the high priest.* As the precise year of Paul's conversion is uncertain, so it is also uncertain who was then the high priest in office. If the conversion of Paul took place as early as the year 36, then Caiaphas was still high priest ; but if, as is more probable, it did not occur until the year 37, then either Jonathan the son of Annas, who was made high priest by Vitellius, governor of Syria, at the passover of that year (Joseph. *Ant.* xviii. 4. 3), was in office ; or his brother Theophilus, who succeeded him at the following Pentecost (*Ant.* xviii. 5. 3). Annas, however, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, and father of Jonathan and Theophilus, seems still to have exercised the chief power. (See note to Acts iv. 6.)



Ver. 2. Ἡτήσατο παρ' αὐτοῦ ἐπιστολάς—*desired of him letters*. The Sanhedrim, however much its power might have been abridged by the Romans, was still recognised as the supreme Jewish court, and exercised great influence and authority among the Jewish synagogues abroad, especially in cities bordering upon Palestine. (See former note on the Sanhedrim.) Εἰς Δαμασκὸν—to *Damascus*. Damascus is about 140 miles north-east from Jerusalem, situated on a large fertile plain or oasis, well watered with many rivulets, and on all sides surrounded by the desert. Its name occurs as early as the time of Abraham, being mentioned as the residence of Eleazar, the steward of his house (Gen. xv. 2). Afterwards it became the capital of the Syrian kings, who were engaged in constant war with the kings of Israel and Judah. Twice it was occupied by the Israelites—once by David, and a second time by Jeroboam II. king of Israel. It was successively possessed by the Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, and Greeks, and at length fell into the possession of the Romans during the wars of Mithridates, when it was taken by Pompey (Joseph. *Ant.* xiv. 2. 3). At the time of Paul's conversion, Damascus was probably under the Romans, though some suppose that it was temporarily occupied by Aretas, the king of Arabia Nabatæa (1 Cor. xi. 32). But this occupation probably occurred three years afterwards. (See note to Acts ix. 25.) It abounded so much with Jews, that Josephus tells us that during the Jewish war ten thousand of them were massacred in one hour (*Bell. Jud.* ii. 20. 2). In the year 634 it fell into the hands of the Saracens, and under the Ommiad caliphs became the capital of the Mohammedan world. It was much celebrated in the wars of the Crusaders. At present it is one of the largest cities in the East, containing a population of 150,000, of whom nearly 20,000 are Christians.<sup>1</sup>

Πρὸς τὰς συναγωγὰς—to the *synagogues*. As there was a large Jewish population in Damascus, there would be several

<sup>1</sup> Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*; Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*; Winer's *biblisches Wörterbuch*; Kitto's *Illustrated Commentary*, vol. i. pp. 33, 34.

synagogues. The Christians had not as yet ceased to worship there, and the rulers of the synagogues exercised an oversight over the religious opinions of their members. (See former note on the synagogue.)

"Ὅπως εἰάν τις εὕρῃ τῆς ὁδοῦ ὄντας—*that if he found any of the way.* "The way" is a common expression in the Acts for the Christian religion (Acts xix. 9, xxii. 4, xxiv. 22). It signifies a particular mode of life or conduct. Some render it the way of salvation, the way of faith in Jesus Christ, the way of the Lord. Here, however, being used by one who was then an opponent of Christianity, it is equivalent to the word "sect:" "if he found any of the sect"—that sect among the Jews who believed that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. It is evident that Christians were then so numerous at Damascus, that a report of them had reached Jerusalem. Probably several natives of Damascus had been converted on the day of Pentecost; and some of the dispersed who travelled as far as Phenice and Antioch might have reached Damascus. Being a great mercantile city, there was a constant influx of strangers. Paul may have fixed on Damascus as the sphere of his persecuting zeal, on account of the number of Christians there. Perhaps also, as Lange remarks, he regarded Damascus as the gate to the dispersed Jews of the East in Mesopotamia, Babylon, and Assyria, and it appeared to him to be above all things necessary that that gate should be closed.<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 3. 'Εν δὲ τῷ πορεύεσθαι—and *as he journeyed.* There were several roads between Jerusalem and Damascus, so that it is doubtful which way Paul and his companions took. One road led by Neapolis (Shechem) and Scythopolis, crossing the Jordan at the foot of the Sea of Tiberias, thence to Gadara, and so to Damascus. Another went by a more northern direction, crossed the Jordan a few miles above the Sea of Tiberias, and thence led by Cæsarea Philippi to Damascus. And a third joined the road between Petra and Damascus by Jericho and Heshbon.<sup>2</sup> Whichever

<sup>1</sup> Lange's *Apostolisches Zeitalter*, p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*, vol. i. p. 102.

way was taken, the time occupied in the journey would be about six days. *Ἐγένετο αὐτὸν ἐγγίζειν τῇ Δαμασκῷ*—*it came to pass that he drew near Damascus.* Tradition fixes the scene of the conversion on “an open green spot surrounded by trees,” now used as the Christian burying-place on the eastern side of the city.<sup>1</sup>

*Ἐξαίφνης τε περιήστραψεν αὐτὸν φῶς ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ*—*and suddenly there flashed around him a light from heaven.* Several (Eichhorn, Ammon, Rosenmüller, Kuinœl, Heinrichs, Ewald) attempt to account for the entire occurrence on natural principles. They suppose that Paul was in a disturbed state of mind. He had been deeply impressed with the heroic death of Stephen and other martyrs, and was moved by the prudent counsels of Gamaliel. Hence he felt that he might be in the wrong, and the Christians in the right; and this new outbreak of fanaticism was only an attempt to stifle his convictions. The assertions of the Christians about the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus also weighed upon him. While journeying to Damascus in this perturbed mental state, he encountered a great thunderstorm (Ewald supposes the sirocco):<sup>2</sup> one vivid flash of lightning struck him to the ground, and his excited imagination caused him to see in the lightning the appearance of Jesus, and to hear in the rolling thunder the words of Jesus. And when he arose from the earth he saw no man; he was temporarily blinded by the lightning.<sup>3</sup> Such an opinion is composed of suppositions entirely arbitrary, and has not the slightest foundation in the text, where no mention is made of a storm of thunder and lightning. Besides, of all men, Paul was the most free from fanaticism, and the most unlikely to mistake mere natural phenomena for an actual appearance of Christ; above all, to think that he heard definite words addressed to him, whilst in reality it was only a peal of thunder. His avoidance of unnecessary suffering, his appeal to his privileges as a Roman citizen when threatened

<sup>1</sup> Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*.

<sup>2</sup> Ewald's *Geschichte des Apostolischen Zeitalters*, p. 346.

<sup>3</sup> See Kuinœl's *Novi Testamenti Libri Historici*, vol. iii. p. 152.

with scourging, and his courteous reply to the sneers of Festus, are totally incompatible with the spirit of a fanatic. He was indeed full of zeal; but his zeal was guided by reason and tempered by prudence, as any one may see who carefully peruses his Epistles to the Corinthians.

The view taken by Renan is somewhat similar. He supposes that Paul, when journeying to Damascus, was in a distracted state of mind; that he was troubled and shaken in his faith; that he was frequently filled with remorse for his conduct; that at times he fancied he saw the sweet face of the Master, who inspired the disciples with so much patience, regarding him with an air of pity and tender reproach; and that he was much impressed with the accounts that he had heard of the apparitions of Jesus. As he drew near Damascus these feelings overcame him; his nerves were relaxed; a fever or sunstroke suddenly attacked him, deprived him of consciousness, and threw him senseless on the ground. Then he became a prey to hallucinations: he saw the countenance which had haunted him for several days: he saw Jesus Himself, and heard Him saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" His impetuous nature hurried him from one extreme to another; and when he recovered from this nervous attack, he passed from being a zealous persecutor to be an equally zealous apostle. Renan supposes that it is not improbable that external circumstances may have brought on the crisis: that a thunderstorm may have suddenly broken out; and that Paul, in his excitement, interpreted as the voice of the storm the thoughts really passing in his own mind.<sup>1</sup>

But all these rationalistic writers are surpassed by Bahrdr, who supposes that Jesus was only apparently dead upon the cross, and that after His revival He lived in retirement, and came forth from it to present Himself to Paul in order to destroy his persecuting zeal. Equally unfounded is the opinion of Bretschneider, who supposes that all this happened to Paul in a trance, and was the same vision to which he alludes in 2 Cor. xii. 1-7. Paul was not alone when the

<sup>1</sup> Renan's *Les Apôtres*, ch. x.



event happened: he had companions with him, who were also arrested by the appearance.<sup>1</sup>

Another class of critics (Baur, Zeller), finding the rationalistic explanation indefensible, endeavour to account for the occurrence on mythical principles. They suppose that the true account of Paul's conversion has been embellished by a series of myths and miraculous interpositions. But still the fact that Paul was converted has to be accounted for; and Zeller is forced to admit that Paul himself was convinced of the reality of the appearance of Christ to him.<sup>2</sup>

All these explanations are attempts to get rid of the miraculous. As Neander well observes: "In the explanation of the transaction of which we are here speaking, it is of consequence in what relation the inquirer is placed to that on which the essence of the Christian faith rests, and with which it stands or falls—the fact of the actual resurrection of Christ. Whoever acknowledges this, occupies a standpoint where he can have no motive to deny the supernatural in the history that is connected with that fact. Such a person can have no ground for mistrusting the expressions of Paul respecting this appearance to him of the risen Saviour. But whoever, from his own point of view, cannot acknowledge the actual resurrection of Christ, is so far incapacitated for admitting the objective nature of this appearance to Paul, and must from the first stand in a hostile relation to it." <sup>3</sup>

The state of Paul's mind at the time of his conversion is an interesting subject of inquiry: in other words, How far was this sudden conversion prepared? Some (Neander, Olshausen) suppose that there was a preparation. According to them, Paul was deeply impressed with the death of

<sup>1</sup> So also Dr. Davidson accounts for Paul's conversion by conceiving that the phenomena were subjective, and not objective; and he explains it by parallels in the lives of Ignatius Loyola and Colonel Gardiner (*New Introduction to the New Testament*, ii. 246–248).

<sup>2</sup> Zeller's *Apostelgeschichte*, pp. 195–197.

<sup>3</sup> Neander's *Planting*, vol. ii. p. 94. See also the short but excellent remarks of Meyer on Paul's conversion, *Apostelgeschichte*, pp. 200–203.

Stephen; he felt that Jesus might possibly be the Messiah, and there was a violent struggle carried on within him between his old pharisaical notions and these new convictions.<sup>1</sup> But, in the narrative, there is nothing to countenance this view of the subject. On the contrary, we are informed that Paul consented to the death of Stephen, and that his hatred against the Christians was not in the least abated. Accordingly others (Baumgarten, Meyer) suppose that there was no preparation whatever; that he was blinded up to the very moment of his conversion; that he had neither doubts nor scruples about what he was doing.<sup>2</sup> The truth seems to lie between these extremes. Paul, in the midst of all his errors, was actuated by the love of the truth; his zeal for what he thought the truth of God was the cause of his bitter hostility to the Christians. The chief priests, the Sadducees, and the Pharisees, persecuted in a great measure from impure and unworthy motives; whereas with Paul there was always the conviction that he was doing God service. Falsehood and insincerity were foreign to his character.

Ver. 4. The light which flashed around Paul and his companions was the light of the divine glory (δόξα)—the Shekinah, in which Christ now dwells. It is not directly asserted, but seems implied, that Paul saw in this light the glorified body of Jesus (note to ver. 17). The voice called him by name, "Saul, Saul!" Elsewhere we are informed that these words were spoken in the Hebrew tongue; and accordingly the words here are according to the Hebrew, and not the Greek form: Σαούλ, Σαούλ, τί με διώκεις;—*why persecutest thou me?* As Chrysostom beautifully renders it, "What wrong, great or small, hast thou suffered from me, that thou doest these things?" Christ here identifies Himself with His people. He does not charge Paul with persecuting His disciples, but with persecuting Himself (Luke x. 16).

Ver. 5. *Τίς εἶ, Κύριε*;—*Who art Thou, Lord?* Paul would

<sup>1</sup> Olshausen *on the Gospels and Acts*, vol. iv. p. 347.

<sup>2</sup> Baumgarten's *Apostolic History*, vol. i. p. 206; Meyer's *Apostel-geschichte*, p. 201.

at first be awe-struck when he saw the glorified appearance, and heard the voice speaking to him; but the thought would soon occur to him that He who now addressed him was Jesus, whose disciples he was persecuting. "Conscience itself would readily say that it is Jesus" (Bengel). The interpolation which follows in the *textus receptus*—from *σκληρόν* to *πρὸς αὐτόν* of ver. 6—is found in no Greek manuscript (see Critical Note). It occurs in the Vulgate, and is quoted by Theophylact and Œcumenius. It is evidently borrowed from other accounts of Paul's conversion: the words *σκληρόν σοι πρὸς κέντρα λακτίζειν* are taken verbatim from ch. xxvi. 14; and *Κύριε, τί με θέλεις ποιῆσαι*; are borrowed from ch. xxii. 10. All Greek manuscripts begin, ver. 6, with *ἀλλὰ*.

Ver. 6. According to the account here given by Luke, the whole address of the Lord to Saul is: "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest; but arise and go to the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do;" whereas, according to Paul himself, in his apology before Agrippa, a longer address is given (Acts xxvi. 16–18). Zeller finds in this a discrepancy between the two narratives;<sup>1</sup> but rather it is one of those variations which confirm the truth of the fact, proving that these two accounts, though incorporated in the Acts, proceed from different sources. Some suppose that the address given in Paul's apology was directly uttered by Jesus to him on the road to Damascus: nor does the short account of Luke forbid this supposition. Others (Meyer, Baumgarten, Olshausen, Lange) suppose that Paul, in his defence before Agrippa, for the sake of brevity, omits all mention of the ministry of Ananias, and gives the address which Ananias was commissioned by Christ to make as if it was actually spoken by Christ in person; so that, as Meyer observes, "Paul condenses his narrative, and what was at a later period enjoined by the mediation of another is put at once into the mouth of Christ, the immediate author of that injunction."<sup>2</sup> Either hypothesis affords a reasonable explanation of the variation in

<sup>1</sup> Zeller's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 192.

<sup>2</sup> Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 204.

the different accounts, and certainly it cannot be maintained that there is any discrepancy between them: the utmost that can be said is, that the one narrative mentions what the other omits.

Ver. 7. In this verse, however, there are two variations which seem much more like discrepancies. First, we are informed that the men who journeyed with Paul stood speechless; whereas, according to ch. xxvi. 14, they all fell to the ground. Secondly, we are told that they heard the voice, but saw no one; whereas, according to ch. xxii. 9, they saw the light, but heard not the voice of Him who spake. But even these differences evidently relate to minute particulars, and instead of militating against the narrative, serve rather, as the unimportant differences of independent witnesses, to confirm its truth.<sup>1</sup>

The first apparent discrepancy relates to the posture of Paul's companions. According to Luke, they stood speechless; according to Paul, they all fell to the ground. Many critics (Neander, Olshausen, Meyer, De Wette, Alford) freely admit the discrepancy, but regard it as minute and entirely unimportant. Others (Lechler, Kuinöl, Baumgarten, Bengel) suppose that these statements refer to different periods of time; that at first they all fell panic-struck to the ground, but that the companions of Paul recovered from their fright sooner than himself, and rose up. Others (Lange, Hackett) suggest what appears the correct solution of the difficulty: that the phrase *εἰστήκεισαν ἐνεοί*, *stood speechless*, does not refer to posture at all, but merely intimates that they remained fixed, were panic-struck, were overpowered by what they heard and saw. It is natural to suppose that they would all fall to the earth through fear; and Paul himself informs us they actually did so.

The second apparent discrepancy relates to the voice from heaven, which according to Luke was audible to Paul's companions, but according to Paul was inaudible. Here there

<sup>1</sup> Although these testimonies are in the same book, yet they proceed from different sources: the one is the narrative of Luke, and the other the narrative of Paul.



seems an actual contradiction. Luke states, ἀκούοντες μὲν τῆς φωνῆς—"hearing the voice;" whereas Paul says, τὴν φωνὴν οὐκ ἤκουσαν τοῦ λαλοῦντος μοι—"they heard not the voice of Him who spoke to me" (Acts xxii. 9). Here also many critics (Neander, Olshausen, Meyer, De Wette, Alford) acknowledge the discrepancy, and do not attempt its removal. By those who attempt a reconciliation, various solutions have been advanced. Some (Castalio, Beza) suppose that when Luke says "they heard the voice," he means the voice of Paul. But this is a forced solution. The voice referred to is, without doubt, the voice of the Lord. Others (Hammond, Rosenmüller, Heinrichs) suppose that φωνή in Luke's narrative is to be taken in the sense of thunder—"they heard the thunder;" a meaning of the word not uncommon in the Septuagint, but here inadmissible. Others (Baumgarten, Lechler, Lange, Wordsworth) think that the meaning, according to Luke, is that they heard the sound of the words; and according to Paul, that they did not understand what was spoken. This appears a perfectly admissible solution. Nor does it do any violence to the words, as ἀκουεῖν is often used in the sense of to understand—to hear with the understanding. According to this solution, then, the meaning is, that the words of the Lord were heard indeed both by Paul and his companions, but were understood only by the former; or, as Baumgarten states it, that "Paul received a clear and definite impression, but his companions an indefinite one."<sup>1</sup> Lange directs attention to a similar circumstance in the life of Christ; where a voice from heaven to Him was heard in a threefold manner: those who were believers recognised it as the voice of God, and heard the words; those who were not believers, but susceptible, heard it as the indistinct utterance of an angel; whilst the unsusceptible multitude regarded it as the noise of thunder (John xii. 28, 29).<sup>2</sup>

Ver. 8. Ἦνεωγμένων δὲ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτοῦ οὐδὲν ἑβλεπε—*and when his eyes were opened he saw nothing.* Paul, rising

<sup>1</sup> Baumgarten's *Apostolic History*, vol. i. p. 209, Clark's translation.

<sup>2</sup> Lange's *Apostolisches Zeitalter*, vol. ii. p. 116.

from the ground, and opening his eyes, found himself blind. He himself tells us that he was blinded by the light which shone from heaven. "I could not see," says he, "for the glory of that light" (Acts xxii. 11). The blindness is not to be explained on natural principles. Some (Eichhorn, Kuinzel) suppose that he was blinded by the lightning, and that the cause of this blindness was temporary amaurosis (*schwarzer Staar*).<sup>1</sup> The light which blinded him was supernatural. Although not asserted in the narrative, yet it is reasonable to suppose, with Calvin, that this blindness had a moral purpose, and served not only to intimate to Paul the blindness of the state in which he had been, but also to impress him with a deeper sense of the power of Jesus as the protector of His people, and to turn his thoughts inward, while he was rendered less liable to distraction by external objects. *Χειραγωγοῦντες δὲ αὐτὸν, εἰσήγαγον εἰς Δαμασκὸν*—*Leading him by the hand, they brought him to Damascus*. Thus Paul entered Damascus in a very different manner from that which he had planned: instead of haling men and women, and committing them to prison, he himself is led, humbled, afflicted, and blind, the prisoner of Jesus Christ.

Ver. 9. *Μὴ βλέπων*—*not seeing*. Winer directs attention to the difference between *μὴ βλέπων* and *οὐ βλέπων*, the one being a milder form of expression than the other. Had *οὐ βλέπων* been used, it would have intimated that Paul had become "stone blind;" but this Luke does not say: he uses the words *μὴ βλέπων*, which express the present blindness of one who formerly had his sight, and might be supposed to recover it.<sup>2</sup> *Καὶ οὐκ ἔφαγεν οὐδὲ ἔπιεν*—*and neither did eat nor drink*. Some suppose that this was a voluntary fast, in token of his deep humiliation for the guilt he had contracted; but it is much more probable that it was the result of the concentration of his mind on spiritual objects. Paul was so deeply affected by all that he had seen and heard—he was then passing through such a great spiritual crisis—that

<sup>1</sup> Kuinzel's *Novi Testamenti Libri Historici*, vol. iii. p. 186.

<sup>2</sup> Winer's *Grammar of the New Testament*, p. 508.

for a time he appeared to be entirely withdrawn from the external world.

Ver. 10. *Ἀνανίας*. We read only of Ananias in connection with Paul's conversion. Some think that he was a native of Jerusalem, who on the dispersion of the disciples came to Damascus; others that he was a native of Damascus who was converted at an earlier period, perhaps on the day of Pentecost. Several rationalistic writers (Eichhorn, Kuinöl, Heinrichs) suppose a previous acquaintance between Paul and Ananias: that they were both deeply interested in each other's welfare, and that both had remarkable dreams; and that this accounts for the interview between them. But this opinion is completely at variance with the text. Ananias, it is evident, only knew Paul by report; and the definite naming of Ananias (ver. 12) in the vision to Paul shows that he was unacquainted with him. According to the traditions of the church, Ananias became bishop of Damascus, and there suffered martyrdom.

Ver. 11. *Ἐπὶ τὴν ῥύμην τὴν καλουμένην Εὐθείαν*—*to the street which is called Straight*. A particular street with colonnades in Damascus is still known by this name; it runs for about two miles through the breadth of the city, from the eastern to the western gate. It is called by the inhabitants the "street of the bazaars." Tradition also points out the house of Judas, with whom Paul lodged.

Vers. 13, 14. *Κύριε, ἀκήκοα ἀπὸ πολλῶν περὶ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς τούτου*—*Lord, I have heard by many concerning this man*. Ananias knew Paul only by report. Perhaps those who fled from Jerusalem to Damascus had informed him of Paul. He was also acquainted with the purpose for which Paul had come to Damascus. This he may have learned by letters from Jerusalem, or Paul's companions in travel may have mentioned it; for it was now three days since they arrived at Damascus. The remarkable event which arrested their progress—the appearance by the way, and Paul's blindness—may have been rumoured abroad. Various motives have been assigned for the apparent hesitation of Ananias to comply at once with the intimation of the Lord. Calvin sug-

gests fear—that Ananias was afraid to appear before Saul the persecutor; but this is evidently erroneous, for Paul was represented to him as praying, and blind. Others think that it was a feeling of moral indignation that such a violent persecutor should receive any marks of the divine favour. But the words do not seem to be the expression of reluctance, but of astonishment; as if he had said, “Is it possible that I should be sent by my Lord to Saul of Tarsus, the violent opponent of the Christians,—Saul, who was coming here with power and authority from the chief priests to persecute the disciples?” *Τοῖς ἁγίοις σου—to Thy saints.* Christians are here called, for the first time, saints. Elsewhere they are called “disciples,” “brethren,” “believers.” This word may allude either to the holiness of their characters, or to their being consecrated and set apart from the world to Christ. *Τοὺς ἐπικαλουμένους τὸ ὄνομα σου—who invoke Thy name:* another designation of believers. See note to Acts vii. 59.

Ver. 15. *Σκεῦος ἐκλογῆς—a chosen vessel:* an instrument for the purpose of carrying the name of Christ, *i.e.* His name as the Messiah and Saviour. *Ἐνώπιον ἐθνῶν—before the Gentiles.* The Gentiles are mentioned first, because Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles. Ananias could not infer from this that the gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles while they continued uncircumcised; for that was a doctrine which neither Paul nor any of the apostles yet knew. *Καὶ βασιλέων—and kings.* And this Paul did when he appeared before the Roman governors Sergius Paulus, Gallio, Felix, and Festus, and the Jewish king Herod Agrippa II. *Τῶν τε Ἰσραήλ—and the children of Israel.* So far were the Jews from being excluded from the sphere of Paul’s ministry, that it was his custom to preach the gospel to them first before he turned to the Gentiles.

Ver. 16. *Γὰρ—for—*giving a reason why he was to be a chosen vessel. He was called to great labours and much suffering for the sake of Christ. The more zealous he was as a missionary, the greater suffering he would have to endure. *Ἵποδείξω αὐτῷ—I will show to him—namely, by*



experience. I will cause him to learn in the after course of his life; not, "I will reveal to him at this time" (De Wette).

Ver. 17. Ἰησοῦς, ὁ ὀφθεῖς σοι ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ ᾗ ἦρχου—*Jesus, who appeared to thee in the way as thou camest.* Neither in Luke's narrative of Paul's conversion, nor in either of the accounts of the same occurrence by the apostle himself, is it directly stated, in so many words, that he actually saw the glorified Jesus. This, however, seems to be implied in each of the narratives; at least it is the impression which these narratives generally leave on the reader. But what can there be only inferred, is elsewhere positively asserted. Here Ananias says that Jesus appeared to him by the way; and Barnabas affirms that he had seen the Lord in the way, and had spoken to Him (Acts ix. 27). But still more direct and positive, and at the same time more convincing, are the apostle's own declarations. In enumerating the evidences of his apostleship, he affirms that he had seen Jesus Christ: οὐχὶ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν τὸν Κύριον ἡμῶν ἑώρακα; (1 Cor. ix. 1). And so also, in mentioning the appearances of Christ after His resurrection, he writes, "Last of all He was seen of me also" (1 Cor. xv. 8), where he obviously refers to a real corporeal manifestation corresponding with the other manifestations mentioned.<sup>1</sup> Christ Himself, then, appeared to Paul on his way to Damascus. He saw Him, and heard His words. To his companions, however, no such revelation was granted: they saw the light from heaven, but not the Person who resided in it; they heard, indeed, the words of Him who spoke, but they heard without understanding them. Πλησθῆς Πνεύματος ἁγίου—and *be filled with the Holy Ghost.* From this it would seem that Paul received the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands of Ananias. Elsewhere it appears to have been the function of the apostles to bestow the miraculous influences of the Spirit; but Paul did not receive them through the apostles, because he was to occupy an independent position, in order that his gospel might be seen not to be of man, but of God. As

<sup>1</sup> Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, pp. 201, 202.

Lange finely observes: "A child of the faith was sent to bind the lion of legal fanaticism with the bands of the Lord. No Peter or John was necessary to convert and anoint him after the Lord had converted him: an unknown disciple was sufficient."<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 18. Ἀπέπεσαν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν—*there fell from his eyes as it were scales.* Some (Lechler, Hackett) suppose that the meaning here is, that Paul, on the recovery of his sight, experienced a sensation as if there fell something like scales from his eyes. Others (Meyer, Bengel) think that some scaly substance had spread over his eyes, and that this substance fell off when he received sight. Eichhorn attempts to account for this on natural principles; that fasting, joy, and the cold hands of an old man removed the amaurosis. To such a strait is this rationalistic critic forced to betake himself. As the blindness of Paul was miraculous, so also was his cure. The blindness was an emblem of the darkness and prejudice which before veiled his eyes; and the falling off of the scales represented the clearer views of divine truths which he should afterwards receive.

The conversion of Paul is a strong internal proof of the divinity of Christianity. As Lord Lyttleton observes: "The conversion and apostleship of Paul alone, duly considered, is of itself a demonstration sufficient to prove Christianity to be a divine revelation." The change which came over him was thorough and universal: the zealous persecutor became the equally zealous missionary; the Jewish fanatic was changed into the Christian philanthropist. No conceivable motives of personal interest—no desire of fame, riches, power, ease—can possibly account for the change. He himself tells us that it arose from a miraculous appearance of Christ. The narrative of this event cannot possibly be accounted for on the hypothesis that it was either a natural occurrence or a vision. No mythical embellishment can remove the fact of at least Paul's own belief in the appearance of Christ to him. No fanaticism in Paul can account for his being deceived by a mere delusion, and that more especially as

<sup>1</sup> Lange's *Apostolisches Zeitalter*, vol. ii. p. 121.

he was accompanied by others. The only solution possible is, that the event really took place ; that Jesus of Nazareth, the Risen One, revealed Himself as the Messiah to Paul when on his way to Damascus ; and that this revolutionized his entire character and conduct, and converted him from Saul the Jewish persecutor, to Paul the champion of the Christian faith.

## SECTION XIX.

PAUL'S MINISTRY AT DAMASCUS.—ACTS IX. 19–30.

19 And he was certain days with the disciples at Damascus. 20 And immediately he preached Jesus in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. 21 But all who heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he who destroyed in Jerusalem those invoking this name, and came hither for this purpose, that he might bring them bound to the chief priests? 22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the Christ. 23 But when many days were fulfilled, the Jews conspired to kill him: 24 But their plot was known to Saul: and they watched the gates day and night to kill him. 25 Then his disciples, having taken him by night, let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket.

26 And when he was come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join himself to the disciples: and all were afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and related to them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly in Damascus in the name of Jesus. 28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. 29 And he spoke and disputed with the Hellenists: but they went about to slay him. 30 And the brethren having learned it, brought him down to Cæsarea, and sent him to Tarsus.

### CRITICAL NOTES.

Ver. 19. 'Ο Σαῦλος, the commencement of a church lesson, is wanting in A, B, C, E, &, and rejected by recent critics. Ver. 20. Instead of Χριστόν, A, B, C, E, & read 'Ιησοῦν, which is undoubtedly the true reading. Ver. 25. The *textus receptus* has αὐτὸν οἱ μαθηταί, the reading of E, G, H; whereas A, B, C, & read οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ: this latter reading has been preferred by Tischendorf, Lachmann, and Meyer; on the contrary, Alford and De Wette prefer the former. (See Exegetical Remarks.) Ver. 26. 'Ο Σαῦλος,



found in G, H, and omitted in A, B, C,  $\kappa$ , is rejected by all recent critics. Instead of εἰς Ἱερ., found in A, B, C,  $\kappa$ , Tischendorf, Lachmann, and Meyer read ἐν Ἱερ., found in E, G, H. Ver. 28. Here, on the contrary, the reading εἰς Ἱερ., found in A, B, C, E, G,  $\kappa$ , is best attested. Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ is the reading of G, H; whereas Κυρίου alone is found in A, B, E,  $\kappa$ , and is the reading adopted by Tischendorf and Lachmann.

#### EXEGETICAL REMARKS.

Ver. 19. Ἡμέρας τινάς — *certain days*. Paul, after his conversion, associated with the disciples. Without doubt, Ananias would introduce him to them; he acted the same part at Damascus which Barnabas afterwards did at Jerusalem. By “certain days” are here meant a few days—a short period.

Ver. 20. Καὶ εὐθέως ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς ἐκήρυσσεν—and *immediately he preached in the synagogues*. Paul, immediately after his conversion, commenced to preach with the zeal of a new convert. He appeared in the synagogues, but for a different purpose from that for which he came up from Jerusalem: not to deliver his letters of authority from the chief priest, and to arrest the Christians; but to proclaim that faith which he came to Damascus to destroy. Τὸν Ἰησοῦν, ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ—*Jesus, that He is the Son of God*. Ἰησοῦν, and not Χριστόν, is the correct reading (see Critical Note)—that the individual person Jesus was the Son of God. The Jews did not deny that Christ was the Son of God; but what they strongly contested was, that Jesus of Nazareth was so. This is the only passage in the Acts where the phrase ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ occurs. It was one of the Messianic titles used by the Jews; so that the phrases “Jesus is the Son of God” (ver. 20), and “Jesus is the Christ” (ver. 22), are equivalent. Thus Nathanael expresses his belief in the Messiahship of Jesus in these terms: “Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel” (John i. 49). And Peter in his confession says, “Thou art

the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. xvi. 16); which in the other Gospels is merely, "Thou art the Christ."

Ver. 21. Ἐξίσταντο δὲ πάντες—all who heard him were astonished. Paul's preaching Jesus as the Christ would doubtless create great astonishment in the synagogues. The report of his coming to Damascus as a persecutor of the Christians had preceded him; but instead of putting his letters of authority into execution, he had been transformed from a persecutor to a Christian evangelist, and publicly avowed his belief in the Messiahship of Jesus. The astonishment here spoken of was that of the unbelieving Jews, not that of the Christians, who had already been informed of Paul's conversion. Τοὺς ἐπικαλουμένους τὸ ὄνομα τοῦτο—those invoking this name. This name, namely Jesus: those who believed that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah.

Ver. 22. Συμβιβάζων ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ Χριστός—proving that this was the Christ. At first Paul merely announced that Jesus was the Messiah; but as he became bolder, he commenced to reason with the Jews: he proved from the correspondence between the life of Jesus and the prophecies of the Old Testament, that He was the Messiah. Συμβιβάζων, joining together, putting things together; hence proving, demonstrating. His past knowledge of the Scriptures, having now found the true key to their interpretation, peculiarly fitted him to be a skilful disputant. As Chrysostom observes: "They thought they were rid of disputation in such matters in getting rid of Stephen; but they found another more vehement than Stephen."<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 23. Ἡμέραι ἱκαναί—many days. According to Paul's own statement, he went immediately after his conversion to Arabia, and returned to Damascus; and it was not until three years after, that he went to Jerusalem (Gal. i. 16, 17). By "many days," then, are here meant these three years, spent partly in Arabia, and partly in Damascus. Of course, unless we had been elsewhere informed to the contrary, we should naturally have concluded that Paul had never left

<sup>1</sup> Chrysostom's *Homilies on the Acts*, Hom. xx.

Damascus. 'Ικανός is often used to signify great, considerable; and hence, in connection with χρόνος or ἡμέραι, it signifies a long period. We have a similar expression in the Old Testament (in the Hebrew, not in the Septuagint), where "many days" are actually used to denote three years: "And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem *many days* (יָמִים רַבִּים). And it came to pass at the end of *three years*, that two of the servants of Shimei ran away" (1 Kings ii. 38, 39).<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 24. Παρετηροῦντο τὰς πύλας—they watched the gates; i.e. the unbelieving Jews did so. Paul, alluding to this occurrence, says: "In Damascus, the governor (ethnarch) under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me" (2 Cor. xi. 32). It is not difficult to reconcile this difference between the accounts.<sup>2</sup> Either the Jews, by the permission of the ethnarch, watched the gates themselves; or, at their instigation, the ethnarch employed his soldiers to do so. Lewin supposes that by the ethnarch is meant a Jewish magistrate appointed by Aretas. Anger thinks that an officer of Aretas happened accidentally to be present in Damascus, and that he used his influence with the Roman government on behalf of the Jews; but this is at variance with 2 Cor. xi. 32, which asserts that the ethnarch kept the city with a garrison. Others suppose that Aretas in Corinthians is not the Arabian king of that name, but the name of the ethnarch, and read the passage thus, "The ethnarch Areta of the king," i.e. of the Roman emperor; but Ἀρέτα is the genitive of Ἀρέτας, the name of the kings of Arabia Nabatæa, and the Roman emperor is never called in Scripture βασιλεύς, but Καίσαρ.

Still, however, the fact of the occupation of Damascus is a historical difficulty. There is no mention of it in Josephus, or elsewhere in history. Damascus was under the Roman government, having been added to the empire by Pompey. Aretas,

<sup>1</sup> See Lange's *Bibelwerk*: *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 166.

<sup>2</sup> And yet, as Paley observes, there is such a difference between the two accounts as renders it utterly improbable that the one should be derived from the other.

on the other hand, was the king of Arabia Nabatæa (whose capital was Petra), and not of Damascus (Strabo, xvi. 4. 24). Aretas seems to have been the common name of a dynasty who ruled over Petra from the time of the Seleucidæ until Trajan, when Arabia Nabatæa was incorporated with the Roman empire; under the emperors, these Arabian princes were not independent, but subject to the Romans. The Aretas in question was the father-in-law of Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee. The difficulty is, how this Aretas could have obtained possession of Damascus, a Roman city.

Various attempts have been made at a solution. Josephus informs us that Aretas and Herod Antipas quarrelled because Herod had repudiated his wife, the daughter of Aretas, and had married his own niece Herodias, the wife of Herod Philip. This quarrel had been increased by some disputes about the boundaries of their respective territories; in consequence of which a war ensued, in which Herod was completely defeated, and his army cut in pieces. Herod applied to Tiberius for assistance, who ordered Vitellius, the governor of Syria (father of the Emperor Vitellius), to make war on Aretas, and to take him either dead or alive. Upon this Vitellius marched at the head of two legions from Antioch; but when he had reached Jerusalem, he heard of the death of Tiberius and the succession of Caligula; and being, as Josephus informs us (*Ant.* xviii. 4. 5), on bad terms with Herod, he made this a pretext for withdrawing his army, and putting them into winter quarters, saying that he had not now the same authority for carrying on the war (*Ant.* xviii. 5. 1–3). It has been accordingly supposed that Aretas, on the withdrawal of the army of Vitellius, seized upon and occupied Damascus. But it is extremely improbable that Vitellius, who is described by Tacitus as an able governor (*Ann.* vi. 32), would suffer such a petty and dependent prince as Aretas to take possession of so important a city. The opinion advanced by Wieseler, that Aretas received Damascus as a free gift from Caligula, is more probable. On the succession of Caligula, there must have been a complete change of policy: Herod Antipas was in disgrace, and his rival Herod



Agrippa was in favour. Josephus also tells us that Vitellius, on account of a personal quarrel, took the opportunity of avenging himself on Herod Antipas. "Vitellius," he observes, "concealed his wrath against Herod until he could be revenged on him, which he was enabled afterwards to effect when Caius succeeded to the government" (*Ant.* xviii. 4. 5). Hence it is extremely probable that the Romans changed sides in the quarrel. The anger of Tiberius against Aretas rested on his personal relations to Herod Antipas; but under Caligula, Herod was out of favour, and was soon after banished to Lyons, and his tetrarchy given to his rival Herod Agrippa. Wieseler accordingly supposes that the Emperor Caligula, on the adjustment of the Asiatic provinces, bestowed on Aretas the government of Damascus, subject to the Romans. This is the more probable, as Damascus bordered on his kingdom, and was formerly possessed by his ancestors. It is some confirmation of this opinion, that although there are Damascene coins of Augustus and Tiberius, and then of Nero and his successors, there are none belonging to the intervening emperors, Caligula and Claudius (Eckhel). This may indeed be accidental; but it follows, at least, that it cannot be proved that Damascus under these emperors was Roman. Wieseler also lays stress on the fact that there is a coin of Damascus with the inscription βασιλέως Ἀρέτου φιλέλληνος (two such coins are in the British Museum); but the opinion of Eckhel is now generally assented to, that this coin belonged to an earlier Aretas, who was contemporary with the later Seleucidæ;<sup>1</sup> and it would seem from Josephus, that the kings of Arabia Nabatæa then possessed Damascus (*Ant.* xiii. 13. 3; *B. J.* i. 6. 2). If the supposition of Wieseler is correct, the occupation of Damascus by Aretas would take place during the reign of Caligula (A.D. 37-40). This, however, gives no certain data by which the chronology of the life of Paul might be fixed, as it is altogether uncertain in what year this occupation took place.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Eckhel, *Doctrina numorum veterum*, vol. iii. p. 330.

<sup>2</sup> For the discussion of this interesting subject, the occupation of

Ver. 25. *Οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ*—*His disciples*. (See Critical Note.) This is the reading adopted by Tischendorf, as it is, upon the whole, better supported, and more difficult. If correct, the allusion is to those Jews whom Paul converted at Damascus. De Wette, however, observes: “Evidently αὐτοῦ is false; for of Paul’s disciples there can be no mention.”<sup>1</sup> Διὰ τοῦ τείχους καθήκαν—*let him down through the wall*. This entirely agrees with the account which Paul himself gives of his escape: “And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall” (2 Cor. xi. 33). In both passages, διὰ τοῦ τείχους are the words employed. This may signify through a window of a house overhanging the wall; and, as Conybeare and Howson tell us, there are such houses in the wall of Damascus at the present day. Or, as Hackett supposes, it may have been through a window in the external face of the wall, opening to houses in the inside of the city. Such houses, he says, he saw to the left of the gate, on the east side of Damascus.<sup>2</sup> Similar modes of escape are mentioned in the Old Testament. Rahab let down the spies through the window, for her house was upon the town wall (Josh. ii. 15); and David, by means of his wife Michal, made his escape in a similar manner (1 Sam. xix. 12). In both instances the words διὰ τῆς θυρίδος are employed in the Septuagint, —the same expression which occurs in Paul’s account of his escape (διὰ θυρίδος, 2 Cor. xi. 33). Tradition fixes on the south side of the city as the place of Paul’s escape.

We have reserved until now the consideration of Paul’s journey to Arabia. Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, speaking of the time of his conversion, says: “Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them who were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

Damascus by Aretas, see Wieseler’s *Chronologie*, pp. 167–173; Conybeare and Howson’s *St. Paul*, vol. i. ch. iii.; Winer’s *Wörterbuch*, article Aretas; Alford’s *Greek Testament*, Acts ix. 24; Lewin’s *St. Paul*, vol. i. pp. 68–70; and Kuinœl’s *Libri Historici*, vol. iii. pp. 161, 162.

<sup>1</sup> De Wette’s *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 90.

<sup>2</sup> Hackett on the *Acts*, vol. i. p. 189; Conybeare and Howson, vol. i. pp. 124, 125.

Then, after three years, I went up to Jerusalem" (Gal. i. 17, 18). In the narrative of Luke there is no mention of this journey to Arabia, and no intimation that three years intervened between Paul's conversion and his visit to Jerusalem; although, with regard to the latter point, *ἡμέραι ἱκαναί* may extend over a space of time as large. The entire omission of the journey may at first sight seem strange, and an apparent discrepancy with the account which Paul himself gives; but we must remember that no objection can be drawn from mere silence, especially if this silence can be in some measure accounted for.

The object of Paul's visit to Arabia, immediately after his conversion, has been variously considered. Some suppose that all that is meant is, that he made Damascus—which, according to their opinion, then belonged to the kingdom of Aretas, king of Arabia—a centre from which he went to preach the gospel in the neighbouring districts. This would certainly remove the difficulty occasioned by the entire omission of this journey in the Acts; but it does not agree with the account of the apostle, who expressly says that he left Damascus, and after a residence in Arabia returned to it. Neander supposes that he spent the three years in preaching the gospel in Arabia; for otherwise we would have read *ἔρημον Ἀραβίας*.<sup>1</sup> The common opinion is by far the most probable, that he retired for meditation and prayer. The great change which had come over him would certainly urge him to retirement, in order to meditate upon this great crisis in his life. He was now about to enter upon his great work as the apostle of Jesus Christ, and he must have felt the importance of preparing for it. These three years which Paul spent in Arabia, no doubt receiving revelations from above, were similar to those three years which the other apostles spent in immediate intercourse with the Lord. And this retirement has also its counterpart in the life of Christ Himself, who, before the commencement of His ministry, withdrew into the wilderness to pray.

But the great point of present consideration is, How is this

<sup>1</sup> Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. p. 91.

journey to Arabia to be reconciled with the narrative of Luke? In what part of this narrative is it to be inserted? Very different opinions have been formed. Some (Baur, Zeller, De Wette) suppose that there is here an inexplicable discrepancy; that in the narrative given us by Luke of Paul's ministry at Damascus, there is no room for the insertion of a three years' residence in Arabia.<sup>1</sup> But this is a violent solution, which ought not to be resorted to until all means of reconciliation have failed. Bishop Pearson places it before the *ἡμέρας τινάς* of ver. 19;<sup>2</sup> but the words, "and he was certain days with the disciples at Damascus," cannot be otherwise understood than that he continued after his conversion for some time with the disciples. Others (Heinrichs, Michaelis, Ewald, Lardner) place it after "the certain days" of ver. 19, but before he preached in the synagogues, as mentioned in ver. 20; but this supposition is contradicted by the word *εὐθέως*, which represents Paul as immediately after his conversion proclaiming Jesus as the Son of God. Others (Olshausen, Kuinöel, Ebrard) place this journey and the return to Damascus after his escape from that city as mentioned in ver. 25. But many considerations are opposed to this: in Paul's account, he states that he retired immediately (*εὐθέως*) after his conversion (Gal. i. 16); in the Acts we are informed that, after his escape, he went up to Jerusalem; nor is it at all probable that he would return to Damascus after the Jews had sought his life, and he had made his escape from it. Others (Lange, Alford) find the point of connection between Luke's narrative and Paul's account of his journey in the words *μᾶλλον ἐνεδυναμούτο*—*increased the more in strength*—in ver. 22.<sup>3</sup> But these words form a continuous narrative with the preceding; and imply what is otherwise most natural, that Paul, by continuing to preach, had gained additional courage and confidence; and certainly it is far-fetched to discover in these words any

<sup>1</sup> Zeller's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 202.

<sup>2</sup> Pearson's *Annals of St. Paul*, pp. 80, 81.

<sup>3</sup> Alford's *Greek Testament*, on Acts ix. 22; Lange's *Apostolisches Zeitalter*, vol. ii. p. 122.



reference to a journey to Arabia. Others (Lechler, Meyer, Neander, Paley, Wordsworth, Hackett) fix upon the *ἡμέραι ἱκαναί*, *the many days* (ver. 23), as the space of time for the insertion of the Arabian journey. And this appears to be the correct solution. It is said in the Acts, "And when many days were fulfilled." Now during this long period Paul may have gone to Arabia. De Wette's objection, that Paul would then have gone out of the way of his enemies, so that their designs against him could never have taken place, is without weight; for, according to this supposition, these hostile designs did not occur until after Paul's return to Damascus from Arabia.<sup>1</sup> It is also to be observed that, on the one hand, Luke does not assert that "the many days" were all spent in Damascus; nor does Paul state that he resided for three years in Arabia, but merely that it was after the lapse of three years that he went up to Jerusalem. According to this opinion, then, "the many days" were spent partly in Arabia and partly in Damascus.

The following appears to have been the series of events:—Paul, immediately after his conversion, spent a few days with the disciples at Damascus, preaching Christ in the synagogues of the Jews (vers. 19–22). Soon afterwards, urged by an internal impulse, he went to Arabia, where he spent two or three years in retirement, preparing himself for his great mission (Gal. i. 15–17). Then he returned to Damascus, and spent some time longer there preaching the gospel (ver. 23). Afterwards, in consequence of a plot of the Jews against his life, he effected his escape, and betook himself to Jerusalem (vers. 24, 25). It is probable that the greater part of the three years was spent, not in Damascus, but in Arabia; for it is to his residence in Arabia that Paul himself gives the greater prominence. Damascus is only incidentally mentioned by him. This also, as we shall see, best accounts for the cold reception which he received from the disciples in Jerusalem.

No explanation, however, has been given of the omission of the Arabian journey by Luke. Most critics suppose that

<sup>1</sup> Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 209.

he was ignorant of it, there being no mention of it in the sources from which he drew his history, and that all that he knew was that an interval had elapsed between Paul's conversion and his visit to Jerusalem. But it is not to be supposed that the companion of the apostle could be ignorant of such an important fact in his life: his conversion must often have been a frequent topic of conversation between them. The probable reason of the omission is, that the journey to Arabia did not lie within the scope of Luke's history. The Acts is not a biography of Paul, and therefore many important events in his life may well be omitted, without supposing any ignorance on the part of the historian. Besides, as the retirement of the apostle was most probably spent in prayer and meditation, and not in preaching the gospel, it evidently formed no part of his missionary labours, which Luke chiefly describes. Paul, in Arabia, was not an evangelist, but a student of theology; not a dispenser, but a receiver of revelations. He who formerly at Jerusalem sat at the feet of Gamaliel, in Arabia sat as a student at the feet of Jesus; and the Acts records not his studies, but his labours: it relates public events which are history, not private events which are biography.

Ver. 26. *Παραγενόμενος δὲ ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ*—*and having come to Jerusalem.* This was Paul's first visit, after his conversion, to Jerusalem. It occurred three years after the appearance of Christ to him, and the purpose for which he made this visit was to see Peter. "After three years, I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter" (Gal. i. 18). Driven from Damascus, he naturally betook himself to the apostles and the first disciples. *Καὶ πάντες ἐφοβοῦντο αὐτόν*, etc.—*And all were afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple.* Here it must be confessed there is no slight difficulty. How can we reconcile this incredulity on the part of the disciples with Paul's miraculous conversion, and with his being a believer for three years? "The first persecution of the primitive church," observes Zeller, "broke out not only in Jerusalem, but throughout Palestine, and beyond it, so that the disciples were filled with fear. At the head of the per-

secutors is Saul. He is in the act of carrying on the persecution even in Damascus, when all at once he steps to the side of his opponents, publicly declaring himself in the synagogues of Damascus for that religion whose deadly foe he had hitherto been, and confounding the Jews with proofs of the divine mission of Jesus. Who will believe that such an important and extraordinary occurrence could possibly have remained unknown for three years to the Christians of Jerusalem; that from the neighbouring city of Damascus, where there was a numerous Jewish population, and constant intercourse with Jerusalem, no information of it had reached Jerusalem; or if such information be supposed, that the appearance of Paul at Damascus had not been able to allay every suspicion of the sincerity of his conversion?"<sup>1</sup> Neander accounts for this want of information on the ground that Saul had not at this time attained to much importance, and that in consequence of the war with King Aretas the communication between Damascus and Jerusalem was partially interrupted.<sup>2</sup> But Paul was well known to the primitive church as a persecutor, and the war with Aretas was in all probability long before this concluded. The three years' retirement of Paul in Arabia appears to be the solution of this difficulty. Paul after his conversion retired, and was unheard of for three years. This would occasion many doubts as to its reality. The impression which the event at first made would have been much diminished by time, and fear that Paul had again fallen back would arise. And when we remember that he was not only a persecutor, but an inquisitor, we need not be surprised that the disciples at Jerusalem received him with some degree of suspicion. It is also to be observed that Luke does not affirm that the disciples had never heard of his conversion, but only that they did not believe that he was a disciple: they doubted the sincerity of his conversion. The more they had suffered from him as a persecutor, the more incredulous would they be inclined to be. As Hackett puts it, "the sudden appear-

<sup>1</sup> Zeller's *Apostelgeschichte*, pp. 203, 204.

<sup>2</sup> Neander's *Planting*, vol. ii. p. 98.

ance of Voltaire in a circle of Christians, claiming to be one of them, would have been something like this return of Saul to Jerusalem as a professed disciple.”<sup>1</sup> And to make the case still more parallel, we must conceive Voltaire a persecutor, and appearing among those whom he had persecuted.

Ver. 27. *Βαρνάβας δὲ ἐπιλαβόμενος αὐτόν*—*but Barnabas took him.* Barnabas, already a chief man among the brethren, introduced him to the apostles. Meyer and others suppose a previous acquaintance between Barnabas and Paul. “It is probable,” observes Howson, “that Barnabas and Saul were acquainted with each other before. Cyprus is within a few hours’ sail of Cilicia. The schools of Tarsus may naturally have attracted one who, though a Levite, was a Hellenist; and there the friendship may have begun which lasted through many vicissitudes, till it was rudely interrupted in the dispute at Antioch.”<sup>2</sup> Such a supposition, however, is without support in the text, and is unnecessary to account for the interest of Barnabas. *ἤγαγεν πρὸς τοὺς ἀποστόλους*—*brought him to the apostles.* Here also there is an apparent difference between this narrative of Luke and the apostle’s own statement. Paul mentions that on this visit to Jerusalem he saw none of the apostles save Peter, and James the Lord’s brother (Gal. i. 18, 19). Not only Baur and Zeller maintain that Luke was here in error, but also such critics as Neander, Meyer, and Lekebusch.<sup>3</sup> But the difference between these accounts is imaginary. If Barnabas brought Paul to two of the apostles, Peter and James, probably the only apostles then at Jerusalem, Luke was entitled to use the expression *ἤγαγεν πρὸς τοὺς ἀποστόλους*. The one account explains and modifies the other. *Καὶ διεγένησατο αὐτοῖς*—*and declared to them.* Not Paul himself (Beza), but Barnabas, delivered this account of the apostle’s conversion. *Ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ*

<sup>1</sup> Hackett on the Acts, vol. i. p. 190.

<sup>2</sup> Conybeare and Howson’s *St. Paul*, vol. i. p. 127.

<sup>3</sup> Zeller’s *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 205; Neander’s *Planting*, vol. ii. p. 96; Meyer’s *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 210; Lekebusch’s *Composition der Apostelgeschichte*, p. 283.



*Ἰησοῦ*—*in the name of Jesus*: the great subject of his preaching—the centre truth on which he insisted: the confession and publication of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God.

Ver. 28. The time which Paul remained at Jerusalem was short, being, as he himself tells us, only fifteen days (Gal. i. 18). Zeller takes exception to this, and objects that, according to Luke, a much longer residence is presupposed: Paul preaches in the synagogues, disputes with the Hellenists, and raises against him a host of opponents. But there is not one word in the Acts from which a longer residence can be inferred; and certainly all that happened does not necessarily require a duration of more than fifteen days. The Jews would be at once excited against Paul, whom they must have regarded as a renegade, and bitterly hated; and therefore it is not surprising that they should almost immediately have formed plans for his murder.

Ver. 29. *Ἐλάλει τε καὶ συνέζητει πρὸς τοὺς Ἑλληνιστάς*—*and he spoke and disputed with the Hellenists*. The Hellenists are those Jews who used the Greek language. (See note to Acts vi. 1.) Paul would be naturally led to dispute with the Hellenists, as he was himself a Hellenist. Perhaps in the same synagogue of Cilicia where he formerly disputed with Stephen, he now disputed with his former allies. He might think that the fact of his conversion would have weight with them, and that the miraculous event which happened to him would convince them also that Jesus was the true Messiah. He wished in some measure to repair the injury he had done.

Ver. 30. *Ἐπιγνόντες δὲ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ, κατήγαγον αὐτὸν εἰς Καισάρειαν*—*And the brethren having learned it, brought him down to Cæsarea*. According to Luke, Paul departed from Jerusalem in consequence of the plots of the Jews to kill him. He himself assigns a different motive—that he departed in consequence of a divine revelation: “And it came to pass, that when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; and saw Him saying to me, Make haste, and get thee quickly

out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me" (Acts xxii. 17, 18). But these two motives do not exclude each other. Paul, notwithstanding the opposition and machinations of the Jews, may have felt desirous to remain: he had a warm heart toward his brethren according to the flesh; he was eager for their conversion; and it required a revelation from Christ Himself to cause him to comply with the importunity of his friends, and to depart. Luke mentions the external reason; Paul the internal motive. *Εἰς Καισάρειαν*—to *Cæsarea*. Paul says that after he departed from Jerusalem, he came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. Some (Calovius, Doddridge, Du Veil, and Olshausen) suppose that *Cæsarea Philippi* is here meant, because that was the most direct road between Jerusalem and Syria. But the word *Cæsarea* by itself evidently points to the much more celebrated city on the Mediterranean, the residence of the Roman procurators—*Cæsarea Palestinæ*. And as to his journey through Syria, this might easily have taken place, either by his proceeding from *Cæsarea* to Tarsus by land, or by sailing to Tyre or Sidon or any of the Phœnician ports, or perhaps at once to Seleucia, the port of Antioch, and then by land from Antioch to Tarsus.

*Εἰς Ταρσόν*—to *Tarsus*. This city must always be interesting to Christians, as the birthplace of Paul—"a Jew of Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city" (Acts xxi. 39). Situated on a fertile plain on the banks of the Cydnus, which flowed through it, it was then a populous city, and the capital of the Roman province of Cilicia. Tarsus was celebrated for its schools, and rivalled the renowned universities of Athens and Alexandria. "They of Tarsus," observes Strabo, "are much addicted to the study of philosophy, and excel Athens and Alexandria, and every other place where there are schools of philosophy. And the reason of this is, because at Tarsus both the natives and strangers are fond of learning: whereas in the other cities, except Alexandria, many come to them; but you will see few of the natives either going abroad or caring to study at

home." And he adds: "Rome is best able to inform us what number of learned men this city has produced, for it is filled with persons from Tarsus and Alexandria" (Strabo, xiv. 5. 12-15).<sup>1</sup> In all probability, it was at these celebrated schools that Paul received his first instructions. Tarsus obtained from Antony the privilege of a free city,—that is, although belonging to the Roman empire, it enjoyed the right of being governed by its own laws, and of choosing its own magistrates; but it is a mistake to suppose that this privilege constituted its inhabitants Roman citizens. It was not until several years afterwards that it became a Roman colony. It is now a poor and dirty town, known by the name Tarsous, though it has still a population of 30,000.<sup>2</sup>

Paul in Tarsus was now in his native city. He had gone forth from it a Pharisee, a zealot for Judaism; he had now returned a Christian, and was about to commence his apostolic career. He did not spend his time here, as in Arabia, in retirement, but in preaching the gospel. He himself tells us that he preached Christ in Cilicia, of which Tarsus is the capital; and doubtless the churches of Cilicia, afterwards mentioned (Acts xv. 23, 41), owe their origin to this residence of Paul in his native country. Here, in all probability, he resided for about two years; after which he was sought out by the same Barnabas who had introduced him to the apostles, and was called to engage in a far wider sphere of labour—as the apostle, not of Cilicia merely, but of the whole Gentile world.

<sup>1</sup> Strabo makes frequent mention of the gymnasium for young men at Tarsus. Perhaps it was from the games exhibited in this gymnasium of his native city, that Paul derived his numerous illustrations drawn from the Greek games.

<sup>2</sup> Winer's *Realwörterbuch*; Conybeare and Howson, vol. i. pp. 27 and 130.

## SECTION XX.

### THE MIRACLES OF PETER.—ACTS IX. 31-43.

31 Then the church had peace throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, being edified and walking in the fear of the Lord, and by the exhortation of the Holy Ghost, was multiplied. 32 And it came to pass that Peter, passing through all places, came down also to the saints who dwelt at Lydda. 33 And he found there a certain man named Æneas, who had kept his bed for eight years, and was paralyzed. 34 And Peter said to him, Æneas, Jesus the Christ makes thee whole; arise, and make thy bed. And immediately he arose. 35 And all the inhabitants of Lydda and Saron saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

36 Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, who by interpretation is called Dorcas: she was full of good works and alms which she did. 37 And it came to pass in those days, that she fell sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid in an upper chamber. 38 And as Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples having heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him, exhorting him, Delay not to come to us. 39 Then Peter arose, and went with them. When he was come, they brought him to the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing tunics and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them. 40 But Peter, having put them all out, kneeled down and prayed; and having turned to the body, he said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes; and seeing Peter, she sat up. 41 And having given her his hand, he raised her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive. 42 And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed on the Lord. 43 And it came to pass, that he remained many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.

### CRITICAL NOTES.

Ver. 31. The singular ἡ . . . ἐκκλησία . . . εἶχεν . . . οἰκοδομουμένη καὶ πορευομένη . . . ἐπληθύνετο, is the reading of A, B, C,  $\aleph$ , and is preferred by all the recent critics to the plural, the reading of the *textus receptus*, which is found in E, G, H. Ver. 38. Μὴ ὀκνήσης διελθεῖν ἕως ἡμῶν is found in A, B, C, E,  $\aleph$ , and is preferred by all the recent critics



to μὴ ὀκνῆσαι διελθεῖν ἕως αὐτῶν of the *textus receptus*, found in G, H.

#### EXEGETICAL REMARKS.

Ver. 31. Ἡ μὲν οὖν ἐκκλησία—*Then the church*. The church (see Critical Note) is here mentioned in its unity, as embracing all the different churches throughout the three provinces of Palestine. “The external bond of this unity was the apostles; the internal, the Holy Ghost: Christ, the one head: the forms of the union were as yet undeveloped” (Meyer). Καθ’ ὅλης τῆς Ἰουδαίας, καὶ Γαλιλαίας, καὶ Σαμαρείας—*throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria*—the three districts into which Palestine was at that time divided. We have been already informed of the planting of the church in Samaria by Philip the evangelist; the dispersed preached the gospel in Judea, and doubtless established churches there (Acts viii. 1); and in Galilee, the chief scene of Christ’s ministry, and the residence of the apostles, the disciples were numerous from the beginning—it was the cradle of Christianity.

Ἐἶχεν εἰρήνην—*had peace; i.e.* rest from the persecution which arose after the death of Stephen. The time when this peace occurred was probably before Paul came to Jerusalem, and during his three years’ residence in Damascus and Arabia; for there is no reason to believe that the persecution lasted three years.<sup>1</sup> According to this view, the account of Paul’s visit to Jerusalem (vers. 26–30) is given by anticipation. Different causes have been assigned for this cessation of the persecution. The common opinion is, that it was caused by the conversion of Paul, the chief persecutor having turned a Christian. But there is no reason to suppose that Paul’s influence was so great: he was only an instrument in the hands of the Sanhedrim. Calvin thinks that the peace is to be ascribed to the departure of Paul from Jerusalem;<sup>2</sup> that the sight of him provoked the fury of his enemies, and that

<sup>1</sup> The peace extended from the year 38 to the year 44.

<sup>2</sup> Calvin on Acts ix. 31.

on his departure their fury was quieted. But the peace, here referred to, is not merely the peace of the church in Jerusalem, but of the church throughout Palestine. De Wette, with greater probability, supposes that it was occasioned by the general alarm among the Jews, when Petronius, the proconsul of Syria, attempted to introduce the statue of Caligula into the temple.<sup>1</sup> This occasioned great commotion in Palestine, so that there was imminent danger of a war with the Romans. The Jews would then be too much engrossed by their opposition to it, to attend to other matters. The calamity was only averted by the opportune death of Caligula (Joseph. *Ant.* xviii. 8. 2-5; *Bell. Jud.* ii. 10. 1).

Οἰκοδομουμένη—*being edified*; i.e. made progress in Christian perfection, according to the usual meaning of the word in the New Testament: not “increased in numbers” (Kuinoel), for that idea is expressed in the succeeding clause. Καὶ πορευομένη τῷ φόβῳ τοῦ Κυρίου—and *walking in the fear of the Lord*; i.e. leading a holy life. Christianity proved its efficacy by the holiness of the lives of its disciples. Καὶ τῇ παρακλήσει τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἐπληθύνετο—and *by the exhortation of the Holy Ghost, was multiplied*. This difficult clause has been variously translated. Some (Beza, Rosenmüller), as in our English version, connect it with πορευομένη—“walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost;” but it rather appears to be connected with ἐπληθύνετο, for which it assigns the reason. Some (Beza, Calvin) render παρακλήσει *comfort*, a meaning which the word certainly has, but which does not here give a very intelligible sense. The other meaning of the word, *exhortation*, is more appropriate; namely, that the Holy Ghost inspired those who preached the gospel, and inclined the hearts of those who heard. (So Meyer, De Wette, Alford, Lechler.) Ἐπληθύνετο—not *was filled* (Calvin), but, according to the usual meaning of the word in the Acts, *was multiplied*. The piety of the Christians, and their freedom

<sup>1</sup> De Wette's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 91; see also Lardner's Works, vol. i. pp. 54-56.

from persecution, would have a tendency to increase the number of the disciples among the Jews.

Ver. 32. Ἐγένετο δὲ Πέτρον—*And it came to pass that Peter.* The time of this apostolic visitation of Peter has been variously fixed. It must have taken place either before Paul came to Jerusalem, during those three years which he spent in Damascus and Arabia, or after he had departed from Jerusalem; because during his residence there, Peter was present. Some (Olshausen, Wieseler, Alford) adopt the former opinion, that this visitation took place before the arrival of Paul at Jerusalem, and when he was still in Arabia. They argue that it is improbable there should be so great an interval as three years, respecting which no account is given; and that as it can hardly be conceived that the persecution lasted three years, Peter would not delay so long, but set out soon after the peace was established.<sup>1</sup> But these reasons are not conclusive. According to this opinion, the conversion of Cornelius, and the admission of the Gentiles without circumcision into the Christian church, would have occurred before Paul came to Jerusalem. The history, however, would rather seem to indicate that it was after his departure to Cilicia, because the preaching of the dispersed to the Gentiles at Antioch appears to have been contemporaneous with the preaching of Peter to Cornelius and his company (Acts xi. 19–21; see notes to that section); and it was this preaching at Antioch which was the occasion why Barnabas brought Paul from Tarsus to that city (Acts xi. 25). The other opinion (Meyer, De Wette, Lange) is, upon the whole, more probable, that this visitation of Peter occurred during Paul's residence in Tarsus, after his departure from Jerusalem. There is no improbability in supposing that the pause from persecution occurred some time before Peter's journey; and as to the fact that almost three years are passed over in silence, similar omissions are not unusual in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts xxiv. 27).

Διερχόμενον διὰ πάντων—*passing through all.* After πάντων Meyer supplies ἀγίων; but, as Wieseler remarks,

<sup>1</sup> Wieseler's *Chronologie des apostolischen Zeitalters*, p. 146.

διέρχεσθαι διὰ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων is an unusual expression. See, however, Rom. xv. 28. Πάντων is rather to be considered as neuter — *passing through all places*. Peter, as Chrysostom observes, is here again seen to have a certain priority among the apostles. “Like the commander of an army, he went about inspecting the ranks, what part was compact, what in good order, what needed his presence.”<sup>1</sup> Peter’s visitation was for the purpose of settling and confirming those churches which were established by the ministry of the dispersed preachers, and also for the purpose of bestowing the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Κατελθεῖν καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἁγίους τοὺς κατοικοῦντες Λύδδα—*came down to the saints who dwelt at Lydda*. Lydda, the Lod of the Old Testament (Ezra ii. 33), was about a day’s journey from Jerusalem. It was at this period a place of considerable importance; Josephus observes that it was not less than a city in size (*Ant.* xx. 6. 2). Cassius, in order to raise money, sold its inhabitants as slaves. It was twice taken in the Jewish war, first by Cestius Gallus, and at another time by Vespasian (*Bell. Jud.* ii. 19. 1, iv. 8. 1). Afterwards it was rebuilt by the Romans, and called Diospolis. From the fourth century it was the seat of a bishopric. In 415 a council was held here which acquitted Pelagius of heresy. During the wars of the Crusaders, Lydda received the name of St. George, after the patron saint of England, who was said to have been martyred there. At present it is a considerable village, retaining its ancient name Ludd, and is the seat of a Greek bishop, who, however, resides in Jerusalem. “Lydda,” observes Raumer, “is situated in a beautiful undulating plain, which seems like a garden full of olive and fig trees.”<sup>2</sup>

Ver. 33. It is disputed whether Æneas was a Christian. Some suppose that, on account of the indefinite expression ἄνθρωπόν τινα, *a certain man*, and from his not being called, like Tabitha, a disciple, he was not a believer (Lechler, Stier). But the probability is that he was a Christian; for

<sup>1</sup> Chrysostom *on the Acts*, Hom. xxi.

<sup>2</sup> Lange’s *Apostolisches Zeitalter*, vol. ii. p. 127.



it is said that Peter went down to visit the saints in Lydda; and in general, faith in Christ was a prerequisite in those upon whom miracles of healing were wrought. The name is Greek, so that he was probably of Hellenistic descent.

Ver. 34. Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστός: not, as in our version, *Jesus Christ*, but *Jesus the Christ*—the Messiah. Στρώσον σεαυτῷ—*make thy bed*; i.e., in proof of the reality of thy recovery, make thy bed, on which thou hast lain for eight years. Observe here the difference between the manner in which this miracle was wrought by Peter, and the manner in which Jesus Christ performed His miracles. The different characters of the servant and the Son are most apparent (see note to Acts iii. 6).

Ver. 35. Καὶ εἶδαν αὐτὸν πάντες—*And all the inhabitants of Lydda and Saron saw him, and they turned to the Lord*. Kuinöel translates the words, “all the inhabitants of Lydda and Saron who had turned to the Lord saw him;” that is, all Christians who resided in Lydda and Saron. But this is to take the aorist in the sense of the pluperfect, and would make the mention of the fact meaningless. Æneas would be seen by others besides believers (Alford). The meaning then is, that all the inhabitants of Lydda and Saron saw him, and in consequence of this evidence of the Messiahship of Jesus turned to the Lord. Πάντες is here to be taken in a popular sense, expressing the numerous conversions which occurred in consequence of this miracle. Zeller’s objection, that there is here a gross exaggeration, is hypercriticism. Τὸν Σάrawa—*Saron*. Saron, or, as it is called in the Old Testament, Sharon, is a large fertile plain extending along the coast of the Mediterranean for about thirty miles from Joppa to Cæsarea. It is always mentioned with the definite article—the *Sharon*, that is, according to some interpreters, *the plain*. Its beauty and fertility are often alluded to by the sacred writers: as in the Song of Solomon, “I am the rose of Sharon” (Cant. ii. 1); and in the prophecies of Isaiah, “The excellency of Carmel and Sharon” (Isa. xxxv. 2). And notwithstanding the present desolation of the land, it is still represented by travellers as an undulating plain remarkable for its richness and beauty.

Ver. 36. 'Εν 'Ιόππῃ—in Joppa. This celebrated seaport is about thirty-five miles distant from Jerusalem. It was the chief seaport of Judea, until Herod the Great made the artificial harbour of Cæsarea Palestinæ. We find it first mentioned in the book of Joshua by the name of Japho, as belonging to the tribe of Dan (Josh. xix. 46). It was, however, a Philistine city, and was probably not acquired by the Israelites until the days of David. It was the place to which the materials were brought for building both Solomon's and the second temple (2 Chron. ii. 16; Ezra iii. 7). From Joppa Jonah took ship to flee from the presence of the Lord (Jonah i. 3). Jonathan Maccabæus took it from the Syrian kings (1 Macc. x. 76). Pompey attached it to the province of Syria; but it was restored to the Jews by Julius Cæsar, and confirmed to Herod the Great by Augustus. After the deposition of Archelaus, it was again incorporated in Syria. At the time to which the history refers, Joppa was a flourishing town. In the commencement of the Jewish war, it was destroyed by Cestius Gallus on his march to Jerusalem; and it was a second time taken and destroyed by Vespasian, who, in order to protect the country against pirates, erected a fort there, which became the nucleus of a new town (*Bell. Jud.* ii. 18. 19, iii. 9. 2–4). Joppa is frequently mentioned in the wars of the Crusaders, being the port at which the pilgrims landed; and it was among the last towns which surrendered to the Saracens. In modern times it has gained an unhappy notoriety on account of Napoleon's massacre of his prisoners. At present it is the principal seaport of Palestine, with a wretched harbour, known under the name of Jaffa, and containing a population of five thousand, of whom about a thousand are Christians. Joppa is beautifully situated on the undulating plain of Sharon: in the distance are the mountains of Judea, and before it the Mediterranean. Tradition points out the house of Simon, with whom Peter lodged.<sup>1</sup>

Ταβιθά, ἡ διερμηνευομένη λέγεται Δορκάς—*Tabitha, who*

<sup>1</sup> Winer's *biblisches Wörterbuch*; Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*; Lange's *apostolisches Zeitalter*, vol. ii. p. 128.

by interpretation is called Dorcas. Tabitha in the Aramaic, and Dorcas in the Greek, signify a gazelle. Δορκάς appears as a female name among the Greeks (Lucret. iv. 1154), and was not unknown among the Jews. Thus Josephus speaks of one John, who “was called the son of Dorcas, in the language of our country” (*Bell. Jud.* iv. 3. 5). Luke gives her name both in Hebrew and Greek, from which some suppose that she was a Hellenist, whilst others draw the opposite inference that she was a pure Hebrew. But such inferences are mere conjectures. It was at this time the custom for Jews to have two names, the one Hebrew and the other Greek; and this would especially be the case in the seaport of Joppa, which was at once a Gentile and a Jewish town.<sup>1</sup> Besides, it is by no means clear that Tabitha was actually called Dorcas: Luke perhaps only gave the interpretation of her Jewish name for the benefit of his Greek readers.

Ver. 37. Λούσαντες δὲ αὐτήν—*having washed her*. The custom of washing the dead was common, not only among the Jews, but also among the Greeks and Romans (*corpusque lavant frigentis et unguunt*: Virgil, *Æn.* vi. 219). Thus Maimonides says: “It is the custom in Israel about the dead and their burial, that when any is dead, they shut his eyes and wash his body.”

Ver. 38. Ἐγγὺς δὲ οὔσης Λύδδας τῇ Ἰόππῃ—and as Lydda was near to Joppa. The distance between the modern village of Ludd (the ancient Lydda) and Jaffa is only about nine miles. Μὴ ὀκνήσης διελθεῖν ἕως ἡμῶν—*do not delay to come to us*. In the direct form. (See Critical Note.) It does not appear that the disciples, in sending for Peter, had any idea that he could restore Dorcas to life; but they sent for him, that he might give them advice and assistance in their distress.

Ver. 39. Χιτῶνος καὶ ἱμάτια—*tunics and garments*. Χιτῶν, a tunic, the inner garment worn next the skin; ἱμάτιον, the outer garment or mantle, different from the tunic, and worn

<sup>1</sup> According to Strabo, Joppa was inhabited by a mixed population, composed of Egyptians, Arabians, and Phœnicians (Strabo, xvi. 2. 34).

above it: so that the words may be translated *inner and outer garments*.

Ver. 40. Ἐκβαλὼν δὲ ἔξω πάντας ὁ Π.—*But Peter having put them all out*; after the example of his Master, and in order that he might be undisturbed in his prayers. Θεὶς τὰ γόνατα προσηύξατο—*kneeled down and prayed*; namely, to Christ, in whose name the apostles performed their miracles. “This prayer,” observes Lechler, “is the essential feature by which the resurrection of Tabitha is distinguished from that of the daughter of Jairus. Jesus, without any preceding prayer, took the dead child by the hand, and recalled her to life; but Peter does not do so until he had prayed to the Lord for this miracle.”<sup>1</sup>

The raising of Tabitha—the first instance of such a miracle in the Acts—has been explained away by those critics who do not believe in the reality of miracles; some explaining it as a natural occurrence, and others as an unhistorical legend. Critics of the rationalistic school (Heinrichs, Kuinöl) explain the fact as an awakening from apparent death. With them Ewald agrees, who refers the awakening to that boundary line when the last spark of life still remains in man. So also De Wette observes, that although the idea of an apparent death is contrary to the view of the author and of the eye-witnesses, yet they might have erred in their judgment of the case.<sup>2</sup> But such an opinion is directly opposed to the words of the narrative. Tabitha is there represented not only as dead, but as having been dead for some time (ver. 37). Critics of the mythical school (Baur, Zeller) have recourse to the explanation of mythical exaggeration. They suppose that this narrative is a mere transference of the narrative of the resurrection of the daughter of Jairus, for the purpose of glorifying the apostles. Baur even lays stress on the similitude of sound between Ταλιθά (Mark v. 41) and Ταβιθά, and supposes that the latter is borrowed from the former. And Zeller supposes that the narrative is taken rather from Mark's Gospel than from Luke's, because

<sup>1</sup> Lange's *Bibelwerk*: *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 174.

<sup>2</sup> De Wette's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 92.



it did not proceed from the author of the Acts himself, but from another who had the Gospel of Mark before him.<sup>1</sup> To such forced suppositions must these critics have recourse. The account given of Tabitha is entirely natural, especially the fact that the assembled widows showed to Peter the garments she had made. There is no resemblance between this Christian woman and the daughter of Jairus, who is represented as a girl of twelve years of age; so that they cannot be supposed to be one and the same person.

Ver. 43. *Ἡμέρας ἱκανὰς*—*many days*: a long period. (See note to Acts ix. 23.) Perhaps for a year; for we find that Peter abode in Joppa, until he went to Cæsarea. The city was large, and the inhabitants showed a susceptibility toward the gospel. *Παρά τινι Σίμωνι βυρσεῖ*—*with one Simon, a tanner*. By the strict Jews the operation of tanners was regarded as unclean, and they were ordered to dwell apart. This conduct of Peter, then, in lodging with a tanner, proves that he was free from these scruples. The Jewish law in its strictness was gradually losing its hold on him, and he was becoming prepared for the reception of the great truth—the admission of the Gentiles without circumcision into the church of Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Zeller's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 177.

## SECTION XXI.

### VISIONS OF CORNELIUS AND PETER.—Acts x. 1-23.

1 And a certain man in Cæsarea, called Cornelius, a centurion of the cohort called the Italian, 2 A devout man, and fearing God with all his house, and doing many alms-deeds to the people, and praying to God always, 3 Saw in a vision evidently, about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming to him, and saying to him, Cornelius. 4 But he, gazing on him, and being afraid, said, What is it, Lord? And he said to him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. 5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, who is surnamed Peter: 6 He lodges with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea-side. 7 And when the angel who spoke to him was departed, he called two of the household servants, and a devout soldier of them who waited on him; 8 And having related all things to them, he sent them to Joppa.

9 And on the morrow, as they journeyed, and drew nigh to the city, Peter went up to the house-top to pray, about the sixth hour. 10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but, while they made ready, an ecstasy happened to him, 11 And he saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending, as a great linen cloth, united by the four corners, and let down to the earth; 12 In which were all quadrupeds and reptiles of the earth, and birds of heaven. 13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter, kill and eat. 14 But Peter said, By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean. 15 And a voice spoke to him again the second time, What God has cleansed, that regard not thou as common. 16 And this happened thrice: and straightway the vessel was taken up into heaven. 17 Now, while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen might be, behold, the men sent from Cornelius, after they had made inquiry for Simon's house, stood at the gate; 18 And having called, they asked if Simon, who is called Peter, lodges here. 19 While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said to him, Behold, men seek thee. 20 **Arise** therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: because I have sent them. 21 Then Peter, having gone down to the men, said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come? 22 And they said, Cornelius, a centurion, a just man, and one who fears God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned by a holy angel to send for thee to his house, and to hear words from thee. 23 Then, having invited them in, he lodged them.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

Ver. 1. Ἦν after τις is wanting in A, B, C, E, G, and  $\aleph$ , and is omitted by Lachmann and Tischendorf. Ver. 4. Ἐνώπιον before τοῦ Θεοῦ, found in C, E, G, is rejected by Tischendorf, who prefers ἔμπροσθεν, found in A, B,  $\aleph$ . Ver. 5. After Σίμωνα Tischendorf and Lachmann read τινά, found in A, B, C. Ver. 6. The concluding words, οὗτος λαλήσει σοι, τί σε δεῖ ποιεῖν, are wanting in A, B, C, E, G, and  $\aleph$ , and consequently are to be rejected as spurious. Ver. 7. After λαλῶν G reads τῷ Κορνηλίῳ; whereas A, B, C, E,  $\aleph$  read αὐτῷ, the reading adopted by the best critics. Αὐτοῦ after οἰκετῶν, found in G, is omitted in A, B, C, E,  $\aleph$ , and rejected by Lachmann, Tischendorf, etc. Ver. 10. E, G read ἐπέπεσεν; whereas A, B, C,  $\aleph$  read ἐγένετο, the reading preferred by Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Alford. Ver. 11. After καταβαῖνον the *textus receptus* has ἐπ' αὐτόν, which is wanting in A, B, E,  $\aleph$ , and rejected by the best critics. Ver. 12. A, B, C, E,  $\aleph$  place τῆς γῆς after ἐρπετά, the position adopted by Lachmann and Tischendorf. The words καὶ τὰ θηρία, found in G, are omitted in A, B, E,  $\aleph$ , and erased by Lachmann and Tischendorf. Ver. 16. Instead of πάλιν, A, B, C, E,  $\aleph$  read εὐθύς, the reading now generally adopted. Ver. 19. The compound διενθυμουμένου, found in all the best MSS., is to be preferred to the simple verb ἐνθυμουμένου. Τρεῖς after ἄνδρες is found in A, C, E,  $\aleph$ , and wanting in D, G, H (B reads δύο): it is omitted by Tischendorf. Ver. 21. The words τοὺς ἀπεσταλμένους ἀπὸ τοῦ Κορνηλίου πρὸς αὐτόν are only found in a single uncial MS., H, and are certainly spurious.

## EXEGETICAL REMARKS.

This and the two subsequent sections treat of an event which formed a most important crisis in Christianity. Hitherto Christianity had been limited to the Hebrew and Hellenistic Jews, the Jewish proselytes, and the Samaritans, whose religious opinions were allied to those of the Jews;

and thus the Christians might still be regarded as a Jewish sect, differing from their fellow-countrymen only in their belief that Jesus of Nazareth was the true Messiah. But now it was to include the Gentiles: the restrictions which still existed were to be abolished; the universal character of the gospel was to be proclaimed. This truth, almost self-evident to us, was one of the most important declarations in the apostolic times: it was, as Paul terms it, that mystery "which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, but was now revealed unto the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ by the gospel" (Eph. iii. 5, 6).

It may indeed, at first sight, appear strange that Peter should require a special revelation to teach him that the gospel should be preached to the Gentiles, especially after the repeated predictions of the call of the Gentiles made in the Old Testament, and the plain statements of the Lord Himself on this subject. But it is to be observed, that the apostles did not doubt that the Gentiles should be received into the Christian church: they received and held it as the commission of their Master, that they should make disciples of all nations. But then they supposed that the conversion of the Gentiles would take place through the medium of Judaism; that in order to be received into the Christian church, they must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses. Some of the Christian teachers, as Stephen, Philip, and other Hellenists, may have held more liberal views; but even they do not seem to have attempted the direct conversion of the Gentiles. Indeed, there were difficulties in the reception of this truth, which nothing but a divine revelation could overcome. Circumcision was of God, and the uncircumcised were commanded to be cut off from among His people: the law of Moses was of divine origin; Jesus Himself had said, that He came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it; and besides, all their national prejudices as Jews were enlisted in the maintenance of the opinion that they were the peculiar people of God. Hence it was necessary



that believers should be taught by a direct example, that the law of Moses was fulfilled in Christ; that the legal restrictions were now abolished; and that the Gentiles, without circumcision, were admissible into the kingdom of God. The subject is so important, that it is detailed at great length: three accounts are given of the vision of Cornelius, and two of the vision of Peter.

Ver. 1. Ἀνὴρ δέ τις—*But a certain man.* The beginning of this narrative is not abrupt, as in our version, but connected with what goes before by the particle δέ. It was while Peter was at Joppa, in the neighbourhood of Cæsarea, that the event here recorded happened. Ἐν Καισαρείᾳ—in Cæsarea. For a description of Cæsarea, the Roman capital of Judea, and the residence of the Roman governor, see note to Acts viii. 40. Ὀνόματι Κορνήλιος, ἑκατοντάρχης—*by name Cornelius,<sup>1</sup> a centurion.* A centurion was strictly a commander of a hundred men, but the word was used with some degree of latitude. It is a remarkable fact, that all the centurions mentioned in the New Testament are favourably noticed. There is the centurion in Capernaum, whose faith our Lord commended (Matt. viii. 5); the centurion who attended at the crucifixion, and who acknowledged Jesus as the Son of God (Matt. xxvii. 54); the centurion who accompanied Paul to Rome, and was so favourably disposed to him (Acts xxvii. 3, 43); and here Cornelius, the first-fruits of the Gentiles. Ἐκ σπείρης—*of the cohort.* A cohort was about the tenth part of a legion, and consisted of about six hundred men. It however varied, according to the size of the legion. Τῆς καλουμένης Ἰταλικῆς—*called the Italian.* This cohort was so called, probably because the soldiers belonging to it were Italians, or Romans. In general, the Roman troops were at this time drawn from the inhabitants of the countries where they were quartered (Joseph. *Ant.* xiv. 15. 10). This Italian cohort would be somewhat similar to a British regiment in India, as distinguished from the

<sup>1</sup> No inference can be drawn in favour of the superior rank of Cornelius, because he bore such a distinguished name (Conybeare and Howson, vol. i. p. 143). The name was common among the Romans.

Sepoys, or native troops. This cohort was at Cæsarea, and perhaps formed the body-guard of the Roman governor: they were troops on whom he could depend in disputes with the natives. This Italian cohort, however, is not to be confounded with the Italian legion (*Legio Italica*), which Tacitus mentions in his history of the reign of Otho (*Hist.* i. 59. 64); as, according to Dio Cassius, this legion was not formed until the reign of Nero (lib. lv. 24). It is generally supposed to have been an independent cohort, attached to no legion, being a species of pretorian guard to the Roman procurator. Wieseler, with some degree of probability, supposes that it was composed of Italian volunteers. Arrian speaks of οἱ τῆς σπείρης τῆς Ἰταλικῆς πεζοί, “the foot-soldiers of the Italian cohort;” and there is an ancient inscription, in which the following words occur: *Cohors militum Italicorum voluntaria quæ est in Syria*—“The cohort of Italian volunteers which is in Syria” (Gruter, *Inscr.* p. 434, 1).<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 2. Εὐσεβὴς, καὶ φοβούμενος τὸν Θεὸν—*pious, and fearing God.* Cornelius was one of those Gentiles, not uncommon in the apostolic age, who had become dissatisfied with the religious worship of his ancestors, and was attached to the purer religion of the Jews. He had ceased to be an idolater, and had become a worshipper of the true God. He had so far adopted the principles of Judaism, that he kept its hours of worship, attached himself in some degree to the Jews, and perhaps attended their synagogues, but yet had not submitted to the rite of circumcision, or adopted their ceremonial observances. Ποιῶν τε ἐλεημοσύνας πολλὰς τῷ λαῷ—and *doing many alms-deeds to the people.* Ὁ λαὸς here evidently refers to the people of Israel; and hence it is said that “he was of good report among all the nation of the Jews” (Acts x. 22). There is a striking resemblance between Cornelius and the centurion in Capernaum, of whom it is said that he loved the nation of the Jews, and built for them a synagogue (Luke vii. 4, 5). Καὶ δεόμενος τοῦ Θεοῦ διὰ παντός—and *praying to God*

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Akerman's *Numismatic Illustrations of the Acts*, pp. 33–35. See also Wieseler's *Chronologie*, p. 145; Biscoe on the *Acts*, pp. 300–314.

*always.* Cornelius, having in a measure adopted the principles of Judaism, shared with the Jews in their Messianic hopes. He could not have been entirely ignorant of the claims of Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah. Philip the evangelist was probably already in Cæsarea, preaching the gospel (Acts viii. 44): there must have been Christians there; and the fame of Peter's miracles and preaching in the neighbouring cities may have reached the Roman centurion. The narrative itself supposes that Cornelius was not ignorant of the facts of the life of Jesus. Peter in his address takes for granted that he was acquainted with the word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ (Acts x. 36, 37). Hence, then, there is nothing improbable in the supposition that the great subject of the prayers and fastings of Cornelius was that he might obtain more religious light, and especially might be led to the truth with regard to Jesus Christ (Lange, Neander, Alford, Schaff). As Lange observes: "He knew the history of Jesus so far as it was spread abroad: he knew that no small part of the Jews recognised him as the Messiah, and that a division upon this question agitated his co-religionists; and probably his own soul was agitated by the same inquiry, and he longed after a true solution from above."<sup>1</sup>

It is the common opinion that Cornelius was already a proselyte of the gate. So Grotius, Olshausen, Neander, Wieseler, Lekebusch, Stier, and Lange. The character given of him, *εὐσεβὴς καὶ φοβούμενος τὸν Θεόν*, is said to be the exact description of such a proselyte. Cornelius also adopted the Jewish hours of prayer, and was acquainted with the books of the Old Testament, for Peter in his address to him appeals to the prophets; and he was held in estimation by the Jewish inhabitants of Cæsarea. On the other hand, Meyer asserts that the whole description supposes that he was completely unconnected with the Jews by proselytism. Peter calls him *ἀλλόφυλος*, with whom a Jew was not permitted to hold intercourse (Acts x. 28). According to Jewish writers, there were two kinds of proselytes—"pro-

<sup>1</sup> Lange's *apostolische Zeitalter*, vol. ii. p. 129.

selytes of the gate," and "proselytes of righteousness." The proselytes of the gate were those who remained uncircumcised, but were worshippers of the true God, and observed the so-called seven precepts of Noah. These precepts forbade blasphemy, idolatry, murder, incest, theft, disobedience to magistrates, and eating flesh with the blood in it. Such a proselyte they considered Naaman the Syrian to have been. The proselytes of righteousness, again, were those who adopted the whole law of Moses, and in the case of males were circumcised. These were received into the Jewish theocracy, and were regarded as complete Jews. Such a distinction is, however, doubtful. Many eminent critics suppose it to have been a mere invention of the Jewish rabbis. And even if it did exist before the Babylonish captivity, yet, as De Wette and Winer remark, referring to Selden (*de jure nat. et gent.* p. 153) and Maimonides (*Heb. Melc.* i. 6), the inferior grade of proselytism ceased to have any significance after the overthrow of the Jewish kingdom.<sup>1</sup> The only proselytism which the Jews seem to have recognised was when the Gentiles adopted the whole law: such Gentiles are the only persons who, in the Acts, are called by the name of proselytes. Those devout persons who, like Cornelius, worshipped the true God, and adopted the spiritual element of Judaism, were not regarded by the Jews as proselytes; but, so long as they continued uncircumcised, as Gentiles, with whom it was unlawful to hold intercourse. We judge, then, that there was, at least in apostolic times, no such class as "proselytes of the gate;" and that Cornelius, although inclined to Judaism, yet, being uncircumcised, was not in any sense a proselyte, but a type of a numerous class of Gentiles in that day, who, dissatisfied with polytheism, had embraced the monotheism of the Jews.

Ver. 3. *Εἶδεν ἐν ὁράματι φανερῶς*—saw in a vision evidently. The nominative to *εἶδεν* is *ἀνὴρ ὀνόματι Κορνήλιος* of ver. 1, making one long sentence. It would seem that there was an actual outward appearance of an angel to Cornelius, although the word *ὄραμα* is frequently used for that

<sup>1</sup> Winer's *Wörterbuch*—Proselyten.



which has no objective existence (Acts x. 17, xii. 9). Cornelius was awake when the vision appeared to him; and the word *φανερῶς* implies that it was a reality, and no dream. Ὡσεὶ ὥραν ἐνάτην τῆς ἡμέρας—*about the ninth hour of the day*; that is, about three in the afternoon, the hour of the evening sacrifice. Cornelius, although not a Jew, yet adopted their hours of prayer as the proper seasons for his devotion. Ἄγγελον τοῦ Θεοῦ—an *angel of God*. All attempts to give a natural explanation of this appearance are inadmissible, and contradict the text. Eichhorn supposes that Cornelius was very desirous to become acquainted with the distinguished Peter, and had learned from a citizen of Joppa the place of his abode; and whilst engaged in earnest prayer, he felt a peculiar elevation of spirit, by which, as by an angel, he was confirmed in the resolution to make Peter's acquaintance. So also Ewald thinks that Cornelius, hesitating whether or not he should make the acquaintance of Peter, was fixed in his determination to do so, as if he were enlightened by a heavenly certainty, and directed by an angelic voice.<sup>1</sup> And even Neander, by unwarrantably mixing up his own suppositions with the sacred narrative, has given reason to suspect that he assigns to the event a natural explanation. He supposes that Cornelius, acquainted in some measure with the evangelical history, was eagerly desirous of further enlightenment, and of becoming acquainted with Peter. For this purpose he set apart some days for fasting and prayer. In this state of mind he received, by a voice from heaven, an answer to his prayers. That an angel actually appeared to him may be an objective event; but "we need not suppose any actual appearance, for we know not whether a higher spirit cannot communicate itself to men living in a world of sense by an operation on the inward sense. Cornelius is the only witness for the objective reality, and he can only be taken as a credible witness of what he believed he had perceived."<sup>2</sup> It is, however, to be observed, that not only did the angel appear to Cornelius, but communicated to him information

<sup>1</sup> Ewald's *Geschichte des apostolischen Zeitalters*, p. 222.

<sup>2</sup> Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. pp. 68-70.

concerning the residence of Peter; and it is clear from the term *φανερῶς*, and the expression *ὡς ἀπῆλθεν ὁ ἄγγελος*, that an objective appearance is described.

Ver. 4. *Αἱ προσευχαί σου καὶ αἱ ἐλεημοσίαι σου*, etc.—*Thy prayers and thy alms are come up for a memorial before God.* There is here no reference to the Jewish notion that prayers are carried by the angels to the throne of God; or, as Bengel expresses it, “angels are not said to be *ἱερεῖς*, but yet they are *λειτουργοί*.” Some suppose here a doctrinal difficulty, that the good works of Cornelius were accepted before he had faith in Christ; but as Calvin well remarks, “He could obtain nothing by prayer, unless faith went before, which only opens the gate for us to pray.”<sup>1</sup> He had that faith which was at the time possible. He believed in the Messiah of the Old Testament, and was now to be led to a higher faith—belief in Jesus, the Messiah of the New Testament (Meyer).

Ver. 5. *Μετάπεμψαι Σίμωνα τινα*, etc.—*send for one Simon, who is surnamed Peter.* *Τινα* is affixed after *Σίμωνα*, because Simon was one of the most common names among the Jews: it also suggests that Cornelius and Peter were previously unacquainted. Cornelius is not referred to Philip the evangelist, although probably then resident in Cæsarea; because so important a matter as the admission of the Gentiles into the church of Christ was to be effected by the apostles. Nor is he commanded to send to Jerusalem for James or John, but to Joppa for Peter; because it was the peculiar privilege of Peter, granted him by Christ, to open the door of admission into the Christian church, both to the Jews as at Pentecost, and to the Gentiles as at this time.

Ver. 6. *Ἡ ἐστὶν οἰκία παρὰ θάλασσαν*—*whose house is by the sea-side.* (See note to Acts ix. 43.) The house of Simon was on the shore of the Mediterranean, without the walls of Joppa. This was not only for the sake of convenience, but the trade of a tanner was regarded by the Jews as unclean, and was not permitted to be exercised within

<sup>1</sup> Calvin on Acts x. 4.

their cities. *Cadavera et sepulcra separant et coriarium quinquaginta cubitos a civitate* (Surenh. *Mischn.* xi. 9).

Ver. 7. Ὡς δὲ ἀπῆλθεν ὁ ἄγγελος—but *when the angel was departed*. This proves that, according to Luke, there was an objective appearance of an angel to Cornelius: he comes and goes. Δύο τῶν οἰκετῶν: literally, two members of his household; that is, two of his domestics. Στρατιώτην εὐσεβῆ—a *devout soldier*. The soldier had the same religious spirit as his master: he also had renounced idolatry, and was a worshipper of the true God.

Ver. 9. Τῇ δὲ ἐπαύριον ὁδοιπορούντων—and *on the morrow, as they journeyed and drew nigh to the city*. Joppa was about thirty miles south of Cæsarea, and thus the journey would occupy more than one day. The messengers of Cornelius would leave Cæsarea about three in the afternoon, and they arrived at Joppa next day at noon. So also, on their return to Cæsarea, they spend more than one day.

Thus Cornelius was directed by a vision to send for Peter. But there was another difficulty to overcome. Would Peter be willing to come when sent for? The law of Moses, as then interpreted, forbade the Jews to associate with other nations. To remove this difficulty, Peter also has a vision to prepare him to receive the message sent by Cornelius. The two visions correspond: the one answers to the other; and this mutual relationship is an argument in favour of the divine origin of each. Ἀνέβη Πέτρος ἐπὶ τὸ δῶμα προσεύξασθαι—*Peter went up to the house-top to pray*. Δῶμα here is not to be understood in the sense of ὑπερῶν, “an upper chamber” (Luther, Erasmus): this would be contrary to all usage. The vision took place in the open air: Peter saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending. It is true that δῶμα by itself signifies only a house; but the words ἐπὶ τὸ δῶμα signify “on the house-top” (Luke v. 19). The roofs of houses in the East were flat, and consisted of a water-tight floor a little elevated in the centre, to permit the rain-water to run off. In Judea they were, in conformity with the law of Moses, protected by parapets (Deut. xxii. 8). In general, there were two stairs up to them,—the one

through the house, and the other from the street. One could walk along the roofs from one end of the street to the other. We find that they were employed for various purposes: in summer, men slept on them; tents were erected upon them at the feast of tabernacles; conferences were held upon them; and they were used as places for religious exercises (2 Kings xxiii. 12; Jer. xix. 13; Zeph. i. 5).<sup>1</sup> So here Peter betakes himself to the house-top for the purpose of prayer; perhaps on account of the retirement, or the advantage it gave him to look toward the temple of Jerusalem, to which all devout Jews had a regard: thus Daniel in Babylon prayed with his face directed toward Jerusalem (Dan. vi. 10). *Περὶ ὥραν ἕκτην*—*about the sixth hour*; that is, at noon. Besides the two stated hours of prayer—the third and the ninth—the more devout among the Jews set apart a third, at noon. Thus Daniel prayed three times a day (Dan. vi. 10); and David says, “Evening, and morning, and noon will I pray.” (See note to Acts ii. 15.)

Ver. 10. *Πρόσπεινος*—*very hungry*. *Πρός*, the sign of intensity. This word is not found elsewhere. *Ἐγένετο ἐπ’ αὐτὸν ἔκστασις*—*an ecstasy happened to him*. *Ἐκστασις* literally signifies “standing out of oneself:” hence a trance or rapture; or, as St. Chrysostom explains it, “The soul, so to speak, was withdrawn from the body.” Paul in his ecstasy, when he was taken up to the third heavens, says that he was doubtful whether he was in the body or out of the body (2 Cor. xii. 1–3). The *ἔκστασις* of Peter seems to differ from the *ὄραμα* of Cornelius in this, that whereas Peter was entirely insensible to external things, and saw only that which passed before his spirit, but which as in a dream had no objective reality; Cornelius in a waking state, and attentive to what was around him, saw what actually occurred. The linen cloth which came down from heaven was an internal vision imparted to Peter, whereas the angel who stood before Cornelius was an external reality.

Ver. 11. *Καὶ θεωρεῖ τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνεωγμένον*—*And he saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel, as a great linen cloth; i.e.*

<sup>1</sup> Winer’s *Wörterbuch*—Dach.



he saw something like a great linen sheet descending from heaven to earth. The connection between the natural and the supernatural is here to be noted. Peter was very hungry, and would have eaten; and whilst he was in this state he saw in a trance a great linen cloth, containing all manner of food. In the kingdom of God, the natural is made subservient to the spiritual. As Neander observes on this point: "Two tendencies of his nature came into conjunction: the power of the divine had the mastery over his spirit, and the power of the animal want had the mastery over his lower nature. Thus it came to pass that the divine and the natural were mingled together: the divine employed the reflection of the natural as an image or vehicle for the truth about to be revealed. The divine light, which was breaking through the atmosphere of traditionary notions, and was about to rise in his soul, revealed itself in the mirror of sensible images which proceeded from the present want of his animal nature."<sup>1</sup> *Τέσσαρσιν ἀρχαῖς δεδεμένον*—*united by the four corners*. The literal meaning of *ἀρχή* is the beginning; hence *ἀρχαῖς* is here used to signify the beginnings—that is, the extremities or corners—of the linen cloth. Alford objects that, if this were the signification, it would require the definite article; and hence he renders it "by four rope-ends." But no passage can be produced where *ἀρχή* signifies a rope-end: this is introducing another term (rope) into the text. The four corners are by many (Bengel, Lange, Neander, Alford, Wordsworth) supposed to denote the four quarters of the globe: that the whole world—north, south, east, and west—was included in the kingdom of God.

Ver. 12. *Πάντα τὰ τετράποδα*—*all quadrupeds and reptiles of the earth, and birds of heaven*. These words are not to be restricted as if they signified that there were presented to Peter some kinds of animals, or only the unclean animals forbidden to be eaten by the Jewish law; but are to be taken in their literal acceptation, that all animals whatsoever were seen in the vision. The objection to this, that this was an impossibility, is easily answered; for, as Calvin observes,

<sup>1</sup> Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. p. 72.

“we must not measure this seeing according to the manner of men, because the trance gave Peter other eyes.”

Ver. 14. *Μηδαμῶς, Κύριε· ὅτι οὐδέποτε ἔφαγον πᾶν κοινὸν καὶ ἀκάθαρτον*—*By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean.* The devout Jews religiously kept the precepts of the Mosaic law concerning clean and unclean meats. Daniel and his companions chose to be fed on pulse, rather than defile themselves with the king's meat (Dan. i. 8, 12). Eleazar (2 Macc. vi. 18), and the Jewish mother and her seven sons (2 Macc. vii.), suffered death rather than partake of swine's flesh. Hence Peter's refusal to obey a command, against which all his religious notions as a Jew revolted.

Ver. 15. *Ἄ ὁ Θεὸς ἐκαθέρισεν, σὺ μὴ κοίνου*—*What God has cleansed, that regard not thou as common.* The import of the vision is obvious. It was explained to Peter by the Spirit, and by the opportune arrival of the messengers of Cornelius. It referred not merely to clean and unclean animals, but to men—to the distinction between Jews and Gentiles. The Jews looked upon unclean animals as an image of the Gentiles, whom they called dogs. But now Peter was taught that all men were on the same footing in the sight of God. Indirectly also it referred to meats. The distinction between clean and unclean meats which formed so considerable a part of the Mosaic law was abolished; and thus one of the great barriers of separation between Jews and Gentiles was removed. The other great barrier, that of circumcision, was also removed by the direct outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon Cornelius and his household. Some (Olshausen, Lange, Alford) suppose that there is here an intimation of a real purification and consecration of the animal creation: that “the reason of the declaration, ‘What God has cleansed, that regard not thou as common,’ is to be sought for in the completed redemption which is regarded as a restitution of the whole creation.”<sup>1</sup> All things are thus regarded as consecrated by the death of Christ. If the first creation was declared by God to be very good, much more is the second

<sup>1</sup> Olshausen *on the Gospels and the Acts*, vol. iv. p. 370.

purified in the redemption which came down from heaven (Lange). This opinion, however, appears to be far-fetched, and puts a mystical meaning into the text. The distinction of clean and unclean animals was instituted as a barrier of separation between Jews and Gentiles: and when this separation had served its purpose, and was to be abolished in Christ—when the church of God was no longer to be limited to one particular nation, but was to embrace the whole earth—this distinction was done away with; and that which in the Mosaic law referred to animals, is in the religion of Christ spiritualized, and refers to the morality of our actions: “Not that which goeth into the mouth is unclean, but those things which come out of the mouth defile a man.”

Ver. 16. Τοῦτο δὲ ἐγένετο ἐπὶ τρίς — *and this happened thrice*. The vision was thrice repeated, to impart the greater emphasis to it as a thing most important and established by God; and to place it beyond suspicion, as if it were a mere phantom or delusion.

Vers. 17, 18. Ὡς δὲ ἐν ἑαυτῷ διηπόρει ὁ Πέτρος — *Now while Peter doubted in himself*. The true import of the vision was not immediately recognised by Peter; but the arrival of the messengers of Cornelius at this very time, accompanied by the intimation of the Spirit, imparted to him its true meaning. Φωνήσαντες — *having called*. Not because the Jews excluded Gentiles from their houses (Kuinoel); but merely in order to make the necessary inquiries as to whether they had reached their proper destination.

Ver. 19. Εἶπεν τὸ Πνεῦμα αὐτῷ — *the Spirit said to him*. Neander supposes that Peter on the house-top heard the messengers of Cornelius calling on him from below. “Voices of strangers in the court of the house, by whom his own name was repeated, excited his attention. They were the three messengers of Cornelius who were inquiring for him. While Peter was observing the men, who by their appearance were evidently not Jews, the Spirit of God imparted to him a knowledge of the connection between the symbolic vision and the errand of these persons.”<sup>1</sup> But there is nothing of all

<sup>1</sup> Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. p. 73.

this in the text: the arrival of the messengers is first made known to Peter by the Spirit. This was necessary to impart to him undoubted certainty as to the meaning of the vision. We must always remember, in these numerous supernatural interventions and minute divine directions, the infinite importance of the truth revealed—that Christianity should no longer continue a Jewish sect, but become the destined religion of the world: that God was not the God of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.

Ver. 20. "Ὅτι ἐγὼ ἀπέσταλκα αὐτούς—*because I have sent them.* The Spirit is said to be the sender of the messengers, as they could not have come without His divine co-operation: Cornelius was induced by a divine revelation to send them. "Great is the authority of the Spirit! What God doth, this the Spirit is said to do" (Chrysostom).

Vers. 22, 23. Ἐχρηματίσθη—*was warned.* Χρηματίζω in the New Testament is to give a response from God; in the passive, it is to receive a divine response—to be warned or admonished by God. See Matt. ii. 12 (Robinson's *Lexicon of the New Testament*). The revelation on the part of the angel was regarded as the divine answer to the prayers of Cornelius. Αὐτοὺς ἐξένισεν—*he lodged them.* Peter lodged them, although they were Gentiles. He thus acted up to the spirit of the vision, showing how readily he complied with the intimation imparted to him to call no man common or unclean.



## SECTION XXII.

### CONVERSION OF CORNELIUS.—Acts x. 23-48.

23 And on the morrow he arose and went with them, and certain of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him. 24 And the morrow after he entered into Cæsarea. And Cornelius was expecting them, having called together his kinsmen and intimate friends. 25 And it came to pass, as Peter entered, Cornelius having met him, falling at his feet, did him reverence. 26 But Peter raised him, saying, Arise ; I myself also am a man. 27 And conversing with him, he went in, and found many assembled. 28 And he said to them, Ye know that it is unlawful for a man who is a Jew to associate with or come unto a foreigner ; but God showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. 29 Therefore came I without opposition when sent for : I ask therefore for what reason ye have sent for me ? 30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour ; and at the ninth hour I was praying in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, 31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are remembered before God. 32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, who is surnamed Peter ; he lodges in the house of Simon, a tanner, on the sea-side : who, when he comes, shall speak to thee. 33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee ; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee from the Lord. 34 Then Peter, having opened his mouth, said, In truth, I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons : 35 But in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to Him ; 36 (This is) the word which He sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ ; He is Lord of all. 37 Ye know the events which happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached ; 38 (Ye know) Jesus of Nazareth, how that God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost and with power ; who went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed with the devil : because God was with Him. 39 And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem ; whom also they slew, having hanged Him on a tree : 40 Him God raised up the third day, and showed Him openly ; 41 Not to all the people, but to witnesses before appointed of God, even to us who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead. 42 And He commanded

us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who is ordained by God as judge of the living and dead. 43 To Him all the prophets bear witness, that through His name, every one who believes in Him should receive forgiveness of sins.

44 While Peter was yet speaking these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all who heard the discourse. 45 And believers of the circumcision who accompanied Peter were astonished, because that on the Gentiles also the gift of the Holy Ghost was poured out. 46 For they heard them speaking with tongues, and magnifying God. 47 Then Peter answered, Can any one forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they desired him to remain certain days.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

Ver. 23. 'Ο Πέτρος is by the best critics omitted, being inserted as the commencement of an ecclesiastical lesson: 'Αναστάς, wanting in the *textus receptus*, is found in A, B, C, D,  $\aleph$ , and is inserted by Tischendorf, Lachmann, and Meyer. Ver. 24. The singular εἰσῆλθεν, found in B, D, is preferred by Tischendorf and Lachmann to the plural εἰσῆλθον, found in A, C, E, G, H,  $\aleph$ . Ver. 33. Instead of ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ, found in D, G, H, Tischendorf, Meyer, and Lachmann prefer ἀπὸ τοῦ Κυρίου, found in A, C, E.

## EXEGETICAL REMARKS.

Ver. 23. *Τινες τῶν ἀδελφῶν*—*certain of the brethren*. These brethren perhaps accompanied Peter on account of the importance of the matter in hand, that they might be witnesses when he gave in his report to the church at Jerusalem. The number of men, as we are elsewhere informed, was six (Acts xi. 12).

Ver. 24. *Τῇ δὲ ἐπαύριον*—*and on the morrow; i.e. the morrow after the day they set out—the next morning*. As the messengers of Cornelius took two days in journeying from Cæsarea to Joppa, a distance of thirty-two miles, so two days were also consumed on their way back.

Vers. 24–26. 'Ο δὲ Κορνήλιος ἦν προσδοκῶν αὐτούς—but

*Cornelius was expecting them.* He had calculated that they would return about this time, and had accordingly collected a company, composed of those who were similarly disposed with himself, to meet Peter: these were his relations (συγγενεῖς) and his intimate friends (ἀναγκαίους φίλους). Ὡς δὲ ἐγένετο τοῦ εἰσελθεῖν τὸν Πέτρον, etc.—*And it came to pass, as Peter entered, Cornelius having met him.* The Codex Bezae (D) has the following addition: Προσεγγίζοντος δὲ τοῦ Πέτρου εἰς τὴν Καισάρειαν, προδραμὼν εἰς τῶν δούλων διεσάφησεν παραγεγονέναι αὐτόν· ὁ δὲ Κορνήλιος ἐκπηδήσας καὶ συναντήσας αὐτῷ πεσὼν πρὸς τοὺς πόδας προσεκύνησεν αὐτόν—“*And as Peter drew nigh to Cæsarea, one of the servants running, told that he was coming; and Cornelius, having run out and met him, falling at his feet, did him reverence.*” Although defended by Bornemann, this addition is undoubtedly spurious, being found in no other Greek MS. or version, except as a note on the margin of the Syriac. Πесὼν ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας, προσεκύνησεν—*falling at his feet, did him reverence.* It was the custom in the East to express the highest degree of respect by falling down at the feet of the person honoured. It is, however, probable that the reverence here bestowed partook rather of a religious than of a civil character. Cornelius regarded Peter as a being of a superior order, and was perhaps not altogether free from his former heathen notions concerning the deification of heroes, and the appearance of the gods in human form. Ὁ δὲ Πέτρος ἤγειρεν αὐτὸν λέγων, Ἀνάστηθι, etc.—*But Peter raised him, saying, Arise; I myself also am a man.* Peter rejects the reverence which Cornelius paid him, because it savoured of divine homage. (Compare also the conduct of Paul and Barnabas at Lystra, Acts xiv. 15.) There is here a remarkable difference between the conduct of Christ and of His apostles. Christ never rejected any honour that was paid Him, nor rebuked His disciples and the multitude for worshipping Him,—thus proving that He claimed to be of divine origin.

Ver. 27. Καὶ συνομιλῶν αὐτῷ εἰσῆλθεν—and conversing with him, he went in. Εἰσῆλθε—went into the room where

the company was assembled; whereas τοῦ εἰσῆλθεῖν τὸν Πέτρον (ver. 25) refers to his entrance by the outer door into the house.

Ver. 28. Ὑμεῖς ἐπίστασθε ὡς ἀθέμιτόν ἐστιν ἀνδρὶ Ἰουδαίῳ κολλᾶσθαι ἢ προσέρχεσθαι ἄλλοφύλῳ—*Ye know how it is unlawful for a Jew to associate with or come unto a foreigner.* Ἀθέμιτον—*unlawful.* This word only occurs once again in the New Testament, and that in one of Peter's own epistles (1 Pét. iv. 3). There is no direct command in the Mosaic law forbidding Jews to associate with those of other nations. De Wette calls in question the truth of the statement; and Zeller regards it as a proof of the falsehood of the narrative. He refers to the case of Izates king of Adiabene, who was told by Ananias, a Jewish merchant, that he might worship God without being circumcised (Joseph. *Ant.* xx. 2. 4). And besides, considering the mercantile spirit of the Jewish nation, it was an impossibility for them to avoid intercourse with the Gentiles; not to mention that Cornelius had to some extent already adopted the Jewish religion.<sup>1</sup> But this objection evidently proceeds on a strained interpretation of the text. Peter makes a general statement, that there was a repugnance among Jews to associate with Gentiles. The Jewish laws of clean and unclean meats necessarily prevented them from mixing freely with the Gentiles, lest by partaking of their food they should be defiled. And it is to eating that the words of Peter seem chiefly to refer; for the accusation brought against him by the Jewish Christians was, "Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them" (Acts xi. 3). Although the Jews were permitted to transact business with the Gentiles, yet all intimate acquaintance was disallowed. "Moses," says Josephus, "does not allow those who come to us without living after our laws to be admitted into communion with us" (*Contra Apion*, ii. 29). Hence the Jews became obnoxious to the heathen for their unsocial character, and for the hatred and disdain which they bore to all other nations. Thus Tacitus

<sup>1</sup> De Wette's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 96; Zeller's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 187.



observes of them: "They harbour the bitterest animosity against all other nations" (*Hist.* v. 5); and Juvenal says that "they will not point out the way unless to those of their own religion, and that they will conduct those only to the fountain inquired after who are circumcised" (*Sat.* xiv. 103).

Ver. 29. *Ἀναντιρρήτως*—without opposition, without hesitation, promptly. *Τίνι λόγῳ*—for what reason? Although Peter knew the reason, both from revelation and from the messengers of Cornelius, yet he desires him to relate it for the benefit of the company, and that Cornelius himself might be the more impressed by the narration.

Ver. 30. *Ἀπὸ τετάρτης ἡμέρας μέχρι ταύτης τῆς ὥρας ἤμην νηστεύων*—four days ago I was fasting until this hour. Different meanings have been attached to these words. Some (De Wette, Neander) suppose that Cornelius fasted for four days, until the hour when he saw the vision. According to this opinion, however, Cornelius would make no special mention of the day on which he had seen the vision, and which alone was important; and besides, *ταύτης τῆς ὥρας* evidently refers to the present hour, not the hour when the vision happened. Others (Heinrichs, and formerly Meyer) suppose that the words mean that Cornelius fasted four days, reckoning backward from the present time. But besides the improbability that his fast would continue after he had seen the vision, *ἤμην*, the historical tense, cannot be understood so as to include the present. Others (Beza, Grotius, Kuinœl, Olshausen, Bengel, Lechler, Alford, Wordsworth, and Meyer in his last edition) suppose that the meaning is, that four days ago Cornelius was fasting until this very hour of the day in which he was speaking to Peter,—namely, the ninth hour. This agrees exactly with the time mentioned. The messengers of Cornelius took two days to go to Joppa, and two to return; so that four days had elapsed from the time that Cornelius had seen the vision. *Ταύτης τῆς ὥρας*—this hour; the hour of the day in which Cornelius was speaking with Peter, and which was the ninth (*τὴν ἐνάτην*), or three in the afternoon—the same hour of the day on which Cornelius four days ago had seen the vision.

Vers. 30–32. We have here a second account of the vision of Cornelius. The angel is described, according to his appearance, as “a man in bright clothing.” (See Matt. xxviii. 3.) And whereas in ver. 4 the prayers and alms are combined, and are said to ascend up together; here they are separated—the prayer is heard, and the alms are remembered before God.

Ver. 33. *Ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ*—*before God*; i.e. in the presence of God. He who so wonderfully arranged matters as to call us together, is present with us, to assist you in speaking and us in hearing.

Ver. 34. *Ὅτι οὐκ ἔστι προσωπολήμπτης ὁ Θεός*—*that God is not a respecter of persons*. *Προσωπολήμπτης*, a word unknown in classical Greek, found only in this passage of the New Testament, compounded of *λαμβάνειν* and *πρόσωπον*. The meaning here is, that God has not a more favourable regard to the Jews than to the Gentiles. It was no easy lesson for Peter and the Jewish Christians to learn that the distinction between Jews and Gentiles was now abolished—that God is the God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews.

Ver. 35. *Ἀλλ' ἐν παντὶ ἔθναι ὁ φοβούμενος αὐτὸν*, etc.—*But in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to Him*. These words have been perverted as if they taught the superfluity of faith in the doctrines of Christianity. It has been urged, if a man be only a good man, if he be religious and virtuous, he will be accepted by God, whatever his faith may be: it is not creed, but practice, that God requires. But evidently this is not the doctrine taught us in these words. Even De Wette asserts: “To understand this expression *δεκτὸς αὐτῷ ἐστίν* as if it meant the equal value of all religions, and to discern in it a palliation of indifferentism, is the greatest exegetical trifling.”<sup>1</sup> Peter is speaking of the admissibility of the Gentiles into the church of Christ: and he here asserts that there is no natural obstacle in the way of any one who fears God and works righteousness; that there is now no barrier such as circumcision, no external hindrance, but that

<sup>1</sup> De Wette's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 97.

all are equally acceptable to God. As Meyer well puts it, *δεκτὸς αὐτῷ ἐστίν* indicates the capability in relation to God to become a Christian, but not the capability to be saved without Christ; or, as Bengel observes, *non indifferentissimus religionum, sed indifferentia nationum hic asseritur*.<sup>1</sup> “As to these memorable words of Peter,” observes Neander, “the sense cannot be, that in every nation, every one who only rightly employs his own moral power will obtain salvation: for had Peter meant this, he would, in what he added, announcing Jesus as Him by whom alone men could obtain forgiveness of sin and salvation, have contradicted himself. But evidently Peter spoke in opposition to the Jewish nationalism: God judges men not according to their descent or non-descent from the theocratic nation, but according to their disposition. All who, like Cornelius, honour God uprightly, according to the measure of the gift entrusted to them, are acceptable to Him; and He prepares by His grace a way for them, by which they are led to faith in Him who alone can bestow salvation.”<sup>2</sup>

Vers. 36–38. The grammatical construction and interpretation of these verses is very difficult. The question resolves into this: What governs *τὸν λόγον* (ver. 36) in the accusative? The different interpretations arrange themselves into two classes: the one which unites ver. 36 with vers. 34, 35, and the other which unites it with vers. 37, 38.

The first class of interpreters connect ver. 36 with the preceding sentence. According to this view, the words are to be translated as follows: “In truth, I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to Him: (this is) the word which He sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace (between Jews and Gentiles) through Jesus Christ: He is Lord of all.” This is the reading adopted by Tischendorf, who places a comma after *ἐστὶ* in ver. 35.<sup>3</sup> Some (De Wette, Baumgarten, Lange, Alford)

<sup>1</sup> Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 228; Bengel, *in loco*.

<sup>2</sup> Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. pp. 74, 75.

<sup>3</sup> We have accordingly, following Tischendorf, so translated it in

suppose that τὸν λόγον is governed by καταλαμβάνομαι, *I perceive*, in ver. 34. Others (Beza, Castalio, Grotius) take τὸν λόγον ὃν as equivalent to ὃν λόγον—"which word He sent to the children of Israel." Others (Rosenmüller, Bengel) suppose that κατὰ is to be supplied—"according to the word which He sent to the children of Israel." Olshausen supposes τὸν λόγον to be the accusative absolute, and connects it with δεκτὸς αὐτῷ ἐστι.<sup>1</sup> According to Ewald, τὸν λόγον, etc., is an explanation of δικαιοσύνην—"God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, every one will be acceptable to Him who practises that fear and righteousness which He has declared to Israel in the gospel, promising peace through Jesus Christ."<sup>2</sup> The objection to all these interpretations is, that it makes the sentence involved; and almost necessitates us to give an improbable meaning to εἰρήνην, as if it signified peace between Jews and Gentiles. (See below.)

The second class of interpreters (Erasmus, Luther, Heinrichs, Kuinæel, Meyer, Winer, Lechler, Wordsworth) connect ver. 36 with what follows, and suppose τὸν λόγον to be governed by ὑμεῖς οἴδατε of ver. 37.<sup>3</sup> According to this interpretation, there are three successive sentences governed by ὑμεῖς οἴδατε. Peter indicates that what he was about to state was already known to his hearers in a threefold manner:

1. As the word sent to the children of Israel—τὸν λόγον;
2. As events which had happened—τὸ γενόμενον ῥῆμα;
3. As regards the person of Jesus of Nazareth—Ἰησοῦν, etc.<sup>4</sup>

One objection to this is, that the construction is interrupted by a parenthesis, οὗτός ἐστιν πάντων Κύριος, preceding the governing verb. "In Acts x. 36," observes the distinguished grammarian Winer, "τὸν λόγον is probably connected with our version, although the other interpretation appears to us the more correct."

<sup>1</sup> Olshausen on the Gospels and the Acts, vol. iv. p. 374.

<sup>2</sup> Ewald's *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, vol. vi. p. 230.

<sup>3</sup> According to this view, the words are to be translated: "Ye know the word which He sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace, peace, through Jesus Christ: He is Lord of all; even the matter which happened throughout all Judea," etc.

<sup>4</sup> Lange's *Bibelwerk: Apostelgeschichte*, p. 172.



ver. 37; and the words οὗτος, etc.—which, as an independent clause, express a leading thought, which Peter could not well connect by a relative—form a parenthesis; and in ver. 37 the speaker, after this interruption, proceeds by an extension of the thought.”<sup>1</sup> The strongest objection to this rendering is, that Cornelius and his company did not know τὸν λόγον. “These new hearers,” observes Bengel, “knew the history concerning which Peter presently speaks; but they did not as yet know its inner bearings and principles, concerning which he treats in this verse.”<sup>2</sup> But to this it is answered that the gospel is here spoken of in general terms, without reference to its inner bearings and principles, as announcing salvation through Jesus Christ; and it is not improbable that Cornelius and his companions, considering their residence in Judea, and their religious disposition, would be generally acquainted with it.

Ver. 36. Εἰρήνην—*peace*. Some (De Wette, Heinrichs, Alford) understand this of peace between Jews and Gentiles, as in Eph. ii. 17; but this is here an unnatural interpretation, there being no allusion to such a peace in the context. Rather by peace is here meant salvation in general (Meyer)—the glad tidings of the gospel. Πάντων—masculine, not neuter: Lord of all men, and therefore of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews. This description evidently refers not to God, but to Jesus Christ, the last antecedent: He is the supreme Head and King of men.

Ver. 37. Τὸ γερόμενον ῥῆμα—the *thing (spoken of) which happened*. ῥῆμα, according to Meyer, signifies not the thing, but the word: it resumes the delineation of τὸν λόγον, formerly mentioned. Τὸ ῥῆμα certainly does not signify merely the thing, but the thing adverted to or spoken of; hence the matter, the report, the history:<sup>3</sup> You know the thing to which the word (ὁ λόγος) refers. Γερόμενον has been translated, *published*, or which was spoken of; but as afterwards

<sup>1</sup> Winer's *Grammar of the New Testament*, p. 586.

<sup>2</sup> Bengel's *Gnomon*, *in loco*.

<sup>3</sup> “ῥῆμα,” observes Dr. Wordsworth, “means more than λόγος. Λόγος is the *word*; but ῥῆμα is the *matter* or thing declared by the word.”

the events of the life of Jesus are mentioned, it is better to translate it *happened* (see Luke ii. 15, iii. 2). Ἀρξάμενον ἀπὸ τῆς Γαλιλαίας—*beginning from Galilee*. Jesus Christ commenced His ministry, and His fame had its beginning, in Galilee.

Ver. 38. Ἰησοῦν τὸν ἀπὸ Ναζαρέθ—*Jesus of Nazareth*. Ἰησοῦν governed by ὑμεῖς οἶδατε—"Ye know Jesus." Cornelius must have been acquainted with the chief facts of the life of Jesus. He was a resident in Cæsarea, which, although at that time a Roman city, was within the country of Judea, and formerly formed part of the kingdom of Herod and of his son Archelaus. The fame of the miracles of Jesus must during His life have reached Cæsarea; for although it does not appear that He ever visited that city, yet He could not have been far from it when He came to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. Several Christians would at this time be resident in Cæsarea, and perhaps a Christian church was already planted there by those who were scattered abroad at the persecution which arose about Stephen. Philip the evangelist, we are informed, came to Cæsarea (Acts viii. 40), and without doubt carried on his evangelistic labours in that city. Add to all this, that the pious and inquiring spirit of Cornelius would lead him to examine into the facts connected with the life and death of Jesus. Ὡς ἔχρισεν αὐτὸν ὁ Θεός—*how God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost*. This refers chiefly to the miraculous powers with which Jesus was endowed, and which manifested themselves in healing all that were oppressed by the devil. These miraculous powers were not unknown to Cornelius: he must have heard the fame of the miracles of Jesus. Ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς ἦν μετ' αὐτοῦ—*because God was with Him*; i.e. Jesus was the commissioned messenger of God (John iii. 2). The mysterious relation between the Son and the Father is not excluded by this general expression, but is not prominently brought forward, because Peter accommodates himself to his hearers, and leads them gradually to higher views of the person and doctrine of Christ. "He speaks somewhat sparingly of the majesty of Christ, so as to adapt himself to the capacity of his hearers" (Bengel).

Ver. 39. *Ἡμεῖς μάρτυρες*—*we are witnesses*. You know the report, and we are witnesses of the facts. *Ὁν καὶ ἀνείλαν*—*whom also they slew*. By *καί*, “also,” *etiam*, there is a reference to the other sufferings of Jesus inflicted on Him by the Jews. Peter was not ashamed to own that the person whom he preached as the Messiah suffered an ignominious death, that He was taken by His own countrymen and hanged on a tree; since the ignominy of His death was removed by the circumstances which he proceeds to relate. The shame of the cross was done away with by the glory of the resurrection.

Vers. 40, 41. *Ἐδωκεν αὐτὸν ἐμφανῇ γενέσθαι*—*showed Him openly*; literally, “gave Him to become visible.” *Οὐ παντὶ τῷ λαῷ*—*not to all the people*, i.e. not to all the Jews. *Ἀλλὰ μάρτυσιν*—*but to witnesses*. The office of an apostle was to bear witness of Christ’s resurrection (Acts i. 22). *Προκεχειροτονημένοις*—*chosen before*. This word only occurs here in the New Testament: it refers to the time when they were chosen to be the apostles, which happened before the resurrection of Christ. *Οἵτινες συνεφάγομεν καὶ συνεπίομεν αὐτῷ*—*who did eat and drink with Him*; referring not to the communion of the apostles with Christ before His death (Bengel), but to His eating and drinking with them after His resurrection, as an evidence of its reality. The fact is here stated, that Christ did not appear publicly after His resurrection to the Jews, and so confound His enemies by His presence; but that His appearance was restricted to chosen witnesses. It would be out of place to assign the reasons for this fact: this has already been well done by Paley and other writers on the evidences. We would only remark that the evidence which God gave of the resurrection of Christ by the miraculous gifts conferred on the chosen witnesses of it, was more convincing to the world than His appearance in the temple for several days could have been.

Ver. 42. *Τῷ λαῷ*—*to the people*. Not to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews (Kuinoel); but to the Jews, which is the only meaning assignable to *λαός* in this connection (ver. 41). *Κριτῆς ζώντων καὶ νεκρῶν*—*Judge of the living and dead*.

Olshausen understands by the living those who are spiritually alive, and by the dead those who are spiritually dead. But this is certainly an erroneous interpretation, not justified by anything in the context; and it is an important canon of interpretation, "that a figurative sense of words is never admissible except when required by the context" (Alford). The words are to be taken in their obvious sense: by the living are meant those who will be alive at the time of the advent, and by the dead those who will then be dead.

Ver. 43. *Τούτω πάντες οἱ προφῆται μαρτυροῦσιν*—*to Him all the prophets bear witness.* All the prophets in general—the prophetic class. It is to be observed that Peter first mentions the person, miracles, and resurrection of Christ as things that were known to Cornelius and his company; and then contents himself with telling them in general that the Jewish prophets bore witness to Him: and the reason of this is, because he was at present addressing a company of Gentiles to whom miracles were the most obvious proof of a divine commission, but who were comparatively ignorant of the Jewish prophecies. Compare the difference in Paul's mode of reasoning with the Jews and with the Gentiles: in the one case his appeal is to prophecies, and in the other case to miracles. *Πάντα τὸν πιστεύοντα εἰς αὐτόν*—*every one who believes on Him.* Here there is no limitation to the Jews, but a declaration of the universality of Christianity: all national restrictions were at an end. This statement is most appropriately placed by Peter at the conclusion of his discourse.

Ver. 44. *Ἐτι λαλοῦντος τοῦ Πέτρου τὰ ῥήματα*—*While Peter was yet speaking these words.* Having declared the universal nature of Christianity, Peter would doubtless have applied it to the present circumstances; but the effusion of the Spirit, while he was in the act of speaking, rendered all further continuation of his discourse unnecessary, and indeed impossible. Peter's speech, like Stephen's, is left unfinished; but he was not, like Stephen, interrupted by the outcries of a raging multitude, but by the inspired utterances and praises of believers. *Ἐπέπεσεν τὸ Πνεῦμα*



τὸ ἅγιον ἐπὶ πάντας—the *Holy Ghost fell on all*. This is the only example in the Acts of the miraculous influences of the Spirit being bestowed before baptism. In general, this gift was conferred after baptism, and the imposition of the hands of the apostles. Olshausen supposes that this singular event happened for the sake of Peter, in order that he might be assured that the Gentiles without circumcision should be received into the church of Christ; but Peter had already learned this truth by the vision granted him. Meyer and De Wette think that the reason was on account of the peculiar susceptibility of Cornelius and his company. But others as susceptible received the Spirit in the ordinary manner. The probability is, that this exception to the general rule was made for the sake, not of Peter, but of his companions, in order that they might be convinced of the admission of the Gentiles without circumcision into the kingdom of Christ, and might bear testimony in regard to it before the church of Jerusalem. Thus were Cornelius and his company consecrated to God as the first-fruits of the Gentiles to Christ; and thus did God, by directly receiving them into the Christian church, through the effusion of His Spirit, enjoin that they should receive the initiatory rite of baptism.

Ver. 45. Οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς πιστοὶ—*believers of the circumcision; i.e. the six Jewish Christians who accompanied Peter from Joppa*. Henceforth Luke distinguishes Christians into two classes—those of the circumcision, and those of the uncircumcision: calling the former Jews, and the latter Gentiles or Greeks. Ἐξέστησαν—*were astonished*. The Jews had a proverb, that the Holy Ghost never rested upon a Gentile; and this astonishment proves that such a notion was prevalent even among the Jewish Christians. Ἐπὶ τὰ ἔθνη—*on the Gentiles*. Cornelius and his company represented, in the view of the astonished Jewish Christians, the whole Gentile world: they rightly regarded it as a proof that the barrier between Jews and Gentiles was now broken down.

Ver. 46. Λαλούντων γλώσσαις—*speaking with tongues*.

For the phenomenon of speaking with tongues, see note at the end of Section III. Here, and in Acts xix. 6, it is simply γλώσσαις, not ἐτέραις γλώσσαις, as in Acts ii. 4. We are not therefore constrained to suppose that these Gentile converts spoke in foreign languages, as the converts on the day of Pentecost did; but the meaning may only be, that they gave vent to inspired utterances, holy ejaculations: for we are told that they heard them speaking with tongues, and magnifying God.<sup>1</sup> Baumgarten thinks that in this speaking with tongues there is a bond of connection between the speaking on the day of Pentecost, which was the praises of God uttered in foreign languages, and the speaking of the Corinthian church, which consisted of ecstatic utterances.

Ver. 47. Τὸ ὕδωρ—the water. Not water, as in our version, but *the* water, as co-ordinate with *the* Spirit—τὸ Πνεῦμα—"Can any forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Spirit?" The two great parts of baptism—the sign, and the thing signified. Although Cornelius and his company had received the substance, yet Peter did not consider the symbol unnecessary. *Non dicit: jam habent Spiritum, ergo aqua carere possunt* (Bengel).

Ver. 48. Προσέταξεν αὐτοὺς βαπτισθῆναι—he ordered them to be baptized. Peter did not baptize them himself, but ordered others to perform that ceremony. So our Lord did not Himself baptize, but His disciples; and it was Paul's usual custom to employ others to administer baptism (1 Cor. i. 17). Ἐπιμεῖναι—to remain. And, as we are in the next chapter informed, Peter complied with the request: he remained, and did eat with them (Acts xi. 3).

<sup>1</sup> See however Wordsworth, *in loco*.

## SECTION XXIII.

### PETER'S APOLOGY.—Acts xl. 1-18.

1 But the apostles and the brethren who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. 2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they of the circumcision disputed with him, saying, 3 Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. 4 But Peter began and explained it in order to them, saying, 5 I was in the city of Joppa praying : and in an ecstasy I saw a vision, a certain vessel, as a great linen cloth, descending, being let down from heaven by the four corners ; and it came even to me : 6 On which when I had gazed, I considered, and saw quadrupeds of the earth, and wild beasts, and reptiles, and birds of heaven. 7 And I heard also a voice saying to me, Rise, Peter ; kill, and eat. 8 But I said, By no means, Lord : for nothing common or unclean ever entered into my mouth. 9 But a voice answered the second time from heaven, What God has cleansed, that regard not thou as common. 10 And this was done thrice, and all were drawn up again into heaven. 11 And, behold, immediately three men, sent from Cæsarea to me, stood at the house where I was. 12 And the Spirit bade me go with them. And these six brethren also accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house. 13 And he related to us how he saw the angel in his house standing and saying to him, Send to Joppa, and call for Simon, surnamed Peter : 14 Who shall speak to thee words by which thou and all thy house shall be saved. 15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us in the beginning. 16 And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, John baptized with water ; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. 17 Since then God gave them the like gift as to us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, how then was I able to withstand God ? 18 When they heard these things, they were silent, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles given repentance unto life.

#### CRITICAL NOTES.

Ver. 8. *Πάν* before *κοινόν* of the *textus receptus* is found in G, H, but is wanting in A, B, D, E, *κ*, and is rejected by recent critics. Ver. 9. *Μοι* before *φωνή* is found in E,

G, H, but omitted in A, B,  $\aleph$ , and is accordingly rejected by Tischendorf, Lachmann, and Meyer. Ver. 12. The words *μηδὲν διακρινόμενον*, found in E, G, H, are wanting in D; A, B,  $\aleph$  read *μηδὲν διακρίναντα* or *διακρίνοντα*. Tischendorf has omitted the words entirely. Ver. 13. After *Ἰόππην* the *textus receptus* has *ἄνδρας*, found in E, G, H, but wanting in A, B, D,  $\aleph$ , and rejected by recent critics.

#### EXEGETICAL REMARKS.

Ver. 1. *Οἱ ἀπόστολοι*—*the apostles*. It is quite uncertain who of the apostles were at this time in Jerusalem. It would seem that on Paul's visit, shortly before this, only Peter and James the Lord's brother were there. *Κατὰ τὴν Ἰουδαίαν*—not in Judea (English version), but *throughout* Judea. *Ὅτι καὶ τὰ ἔθνη ἐδέξαντο τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ*—*that the Gentiles had received the word of God*. This event must have created great excitement among the Jewish Christians: the important consequences arising from it could hardly be over-estimated. Hitherto the gospel had been preached to those only who had embraced the Jewish religion—it was the gospel of the circumcision; but now, by the conversion of Cornelius, the door was opened to the Gentiles. The conversion of Cornelius was rightly regarded not as an exceptional case, but as a proof that the Gentiles in general might without circumcision be received into the church of Christ.

Ver. 2. *Οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς*—*they of the circumcision*. It is disputed who are here meant. All the brethren then in Jerusalem belonged to this class: they were either Jews or Jewish proselytes. Accordingly some (Olshausen, Meyer, Stier) suppose that all the Christians in Jerusalem, including the apostles themselves, contended with Peter—found fault with him on account of his free intercourse with the Gentiles. But it would seem that *οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς* are here mentioned as a special class among believers, and not as a mere designation of the disciples in general. Accordingly others (Calvin, Lechler, Lange, Alford) restrict this description to those who



were strict Jews—who gave special prominence to circumcision, and to the observance of the Mosaic law in general. The phrase seems afterwards to have been employed to designate the Judaizing Christians—those who regarded the observance of the law of Moses, if not absolutely essential to salvation, yet of the greatest importance; and Luke probably here employed the phrase with the meaning which was attached to it at the time he wrote (Alford). It is not improbable that even some of the apostles may have at this time belonged to this class; but it is highly improbable that all the apostles and brethren would unite in finding fault with Peter. *Διεκρίνοντο πρὸς αὐτόν*—*disputed with him*. From this it is evident that believers knew nothing of the supremacy of Peter, much less of the infallibility which the Romish Church ascribes to him: they freely call in question his conduct, and find fault with him.

Ver. 3. *Ὅτι εἰσῆλθες πρὸς ἄνδρας ἀκροβυστίαν ἔχοντας*, etc. —*Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them*. It is to be observed that they do not find fault with Peter for baptizing the Gentiles, but for holding intercourse with them, and especially for eating with them (comp. Gal. ii. 21). They accuse him of breaking the Jewish laws with regard to the distinction of meats. This was the great offence which in their view he had committed—a grave offence against the notions and practice of the legally disposed among the brethren (see note to Acts x. 28). This may be considered as the commencement of the Jewish controversy which troubled the early Christian church. The great controversy which then existed was not concerning any of those doctrines which afterwards gave rise to our modern controversies, such as the divinity of Christ, the nature and extent of the atonement, and predestination; but it was concerning the bearing of the Jewish religion on the Gentiles. The point discussed was, whether the gospel should be preached to the uncircumcised Gentiles—the admissibility of the Gentiles into the church of Christ. Afterwards, in the celebrated Council of Jerusalem, the question was revived in a somewhat different shape—whether the converted Gentiles were bound to be circumcised, and to

keep the Jewish law. "Certain taught the brethren, saying, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved" (Acts xv. 1). And after this point was settled, various other points of dispute arose with regard to the extent to which the Mosaic law was binding on the Gentiles, and on Christians in general. This controversy was chiefly carried on by the Apostle Paul on the one side, and by the Judaizing Christians on the other; and this gave rise to the first great schism which divided the church, when the Ebionites separated themselves, and formed a Jewish Christian sect, about the beginning of the second century.

Ver. 4. *Ἀρξάμενος δὲ Πέτρος*—*But Peter began and explained it in order to them.* The conduct of Peter is here to be commended. He might have silenced his opponents by reason of his apostolic authority; and to this course he must have been tempted when unjustly accused, because he had faithfully obeyed the intimation of God. But instead of this, he defends himself in the spirit of gentleness, forbearance, and condescension: he calmly enters upon his apology, and merely states the facts, allowing these to speak for him.

Vers. 5-10. In these verses we have the second account of the vision of Peter. The variations in the accounts are slight and unimportant. *Ἐκστάσις* and *ὄραμα* are here mentioned as synonymous. Instead of the simple expression *καθιέμενον ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς*, "let down to the earth," we have the more enlarged form, *καθιεμένην ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, καὶ ἦλθεν ἄχρις ἐμοῦ*, "let down from heaven, and it came even to me." The attention of the apostle is here particularly specified: *εἰς ἣν ἀτενίσας κατενόουν*, "on which, when I gazed, I considered,"—words which are omitted in the mere description of the vision. Instead of *οὐδέποτε ἔφαγον*, "I did never eat," we have *οὐδέποτε εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸ στόμα μου*, "never entered into my mouth." And instead of *ἀνελήμφθη*, *was received up*, we have the more expressive word *ἀνεσπάσθη*, *was drawn up*. For the explanation of the vision, and remarks upon it, see notes to ch. xi. 10-16.

Vers. 11, 12. Here we have also a second account of Peter's journey, accompanied by the messengers of Cornelius

to Cæsarea. The three men standing at the house where Peter was, furnished the interpretation of the vision; and the intimation of the Spirit to him was an assurance of its correctness. Ἦλθον δὲ σὺν ἐμοὶ καὶ οἱ ἕξ ἀδελφοὶ οὗτοι—*and these six brethren also accompanied me.* From this it would appear that the six brethren from Joppa, who came with Peter to Cæsarea, also accompanied him to Jerusalem. Probably Peter took them with him, because he expected that his conduct might be called in question by the church of Jerusalem, or on account of the extreme importance of the event, in order that they might be there as witnesses of what took place in the house of Cornelius. They could testify to the direct effusion of the Holy Ghost upon Cornelius and his household, before Peter received them into the Christian church by baptism. It was of great importance that the facts should be fully attested. The existence of Christianity as a universal religion, and not as a mere Jewish sect, depended on the decision arrived at in this dispute: it was the most important crisis through which the church had yet passed, since its birth on the day of Pentecost.

Vers. 13, 14. Here we have the third account of the vision of Cornelius. Τὸν ἄγγελον—the angel; i.e. the angel already mentioned in ch. x. Luke writes from the standpoint of his readers, or Peter mentions the angel definitively, because he himself was already informed about his appearance. Probably, however, the church of Jerusalem had already received a general account of the vision. Καὶ πᾶς ὁ οἶκός σου—and all thy house. These words are here added. The household of Cornelius were similarly disposed with himself (Acts x. 2), and were therefore included in the message of the angel. And the event justified the declaration; for while Peter spake, the Holy Ghost fell on all them who heard the word (Acts x. 44).

Ver. 15. Ἐπέπεσεν τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐπ' αὐτούς—the Holy Ghost fell on them. It does not appear that this effusion of the Spirit took place in a visible form, as was the case with the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, when cloven

tongues as of fire rested on each of the disciples; but the descent of the Spirit was made evident in an audible manner by Cornelius and his friends speaking with tongues and magnifying God. Ὡςπερ καὶ ἐφ' ἡμᾶς—as on us; referring to the fact of the descent of the Spirit, and not necessarily to its form. Ἐν ἀρχῇ—in the beginning. The beginning here referred to is evidently the memorable day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost in a visible form descended on the disciples. This may well be regarded as the beginning of the Christian dispensation, the birthday of the church of Christ, just as the announcement of the law at Sinai was regarded as the beginning of the Jewish dispensation: both events happened at the same period of the year, namely at Pentecost. If, as is most probable, the call of Cornelius is to be dated after Paul's departure from Jerusalem to Tarsus, then a period of nearly eight years had elapsed between the effusion of the Spirit at Pentecost and the admission of the Gentiles into the church of Christ: for so long a period had Christianity been restricted to the Jews.

Ver. 16. Ἐμνήσθην δὲ τοῦ ῥήματος Κυρίου—*And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said. John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.* This word of the Lord was uttered by Him after His resurrection, and shortly before His ascension (Acts i. 5), with a probable reference to the words of the Baptist himself (Luke iii. 16). (See note to Acts i. 5.) Peter remembered the word. The saying was forcibly brought to his recollection by the event which happened. In the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the Gentiles, he saw the fulfilment of the promise which the Lord had made to His apostles. Hence he regarded the Gentiles as included in the pronoun ὑμεῖς: the promise embraced them. If, then, argues the apostle, the Lord Himself bestowed on them the substance of baptism, by making them partakers of the Holy Ghost, surely the symbol was not to be denied them. By receiving the Spirit, they were already constituted members of the church of Christ.

Ver. 17. Εἰ οὖν τὴν ἴσην δωρεὰν ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Θεὸς ὡς καὶ ἡμῖν—*Since then God gave them the like gift as He did to*



us ; *i.e.*, Since God made no distinction between them and us, bestowing upon both the gift of the Holy Ghost. Πιστεύσασι—*who believed*. This participle has been variously understood. Some (Beza, Heinrichs, Kuinöl, Humphry) unite it with αὐτοῖς—*on their believing* ; but this is the remote antecedent, and is thus contrary to ordinary usage. Others (Alford, Hackett) suppose that it refers to both pronouns—αὐτοῖς and ἡμῖν—setting forth the analogy between the two cases *on believing*. All received the same gift of the Holy Ghost in the same character, viz. that of believers. The most natural interpretation, however, is to unite it to the subject nearest to it, ἡμῖν—to us *who believed*. So Meyer, Bengel, Lechler. Nor is this, as some object, an unmeaning addition ; for it marks the special character of the Jewish Christians, on account of which the Holy Ghost was bestowed on them. As Bengel well observes : “ It was not, says Peter, because we had circumcision, but because we had faith, that the Holy Ghost was given to us.”<sup>1</sup>

Ἐγὼ δὲ τίς ἤμην δυνατὸς κωλύσαι τὸν Θεόν—*How then was I able to resist God?* Two questions are conjoined in one, Who am I, to resist God? And, Was I able to resist God? The first question contrasts the insignificance of man with the majesty of God, and the second question the weakness of man with the omnipotence of God. The meaning evidently is: God, by the effusion of His Spirit, had made known His will that the Gentiles should be received into the Christian church. How then was it possible for me to oppose myself to this revealed will of God? To forbid or hinder that which God had determined to be done, was not only an act of folly or impiety, but an impossibility.

Ver. 18. Ἀκούσαντες δὲ ταῦτα ἡσύχασαν—*When they heard these things, they were silent*. The opponents of the apostle were silenced by his statement of the facts of the case : they ceased to contend. The greater part of them were probably convinced of the propriety of the apostle's conduct ; and thus their objections were changed into exclamations of praise and thanksgiving to God : “ They glorified God, saying, Then

<sup>1</sup> Bengel's *Gnomon*, *in loco*.

hath God to the Gentiles given repentance unto life." Thus the controversy was quieted for a time: the Jewish Christians as a body acquiesced in the admission of the Gentiles without circumcision into the church of Christ. Shortly afterwards the controversy broke forth anew: it was difficult for the Jews to relinquish their peculiar privileges as the favoured people of God: it required much teaching and many revelations and dispensations of Providence, before they could assent to the fact that the law of Moses, having served its purpose, was at once fulfilled and abolished in Christ Jesus.

## SECTION XXIV.

### THE FIRST GENTILE CHURCH.—ACTS XI. 19-30.

19 Now they who were dispersed, owing to the persecution which arose on account of Stephen, travelled as far as Phœnicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, declaring the word to none but to the Jews only. 20 But some of them were Cyprians and Cyrenians, who, when they were come to Antioch, spoke to the Greeks, preaching the Lord Jesus. 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number who believed turned to the Lord.

22 And tidings concerning them came to the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem; and they sent forth Barnabas, to go as far as Antioch: 23 Who, when he came, and saw the grace of God, rejoiced, and exhorted them all with purpose of heart to cleave to the Lord. 24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and a great multitude was added to the Lord. 25 Then he departed to Tarsus, to seek Saul; and having found him, he brought him to Antioch. 26 And it came to pass, that during a whole year they assembled in the church, and taught much people; and that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

27 And in those days came prophets from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 And there arose one of them, named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be a great famine over the whole empire: which also came to pass in the reign of Claudius. 29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea: 30 Which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

### CRITICAL NOTES.

Ver. 20. The two readings of this verse are, 'Ελληνιστάς, *Hellenists*, adopted by the *textus receptus*; and "Ελληνας, *Greeks*. The former reading is best attested by external authorities: it is found in B, E, G, H; whereas the latter is found only in A, D. The Codex Sinaiticus (Ξ) reads ἐλάλουν καὶ πρὸς τοὺς εὐαγγελιστάς, probably a mistake for

ἑλληνιστάς : this has been changed by a later hand into "Ελληνας. Nevertheless the latter reading, "Ελληνας, is preferred by the great majority of recent critics, as it alone gives a good sense. It would be nothing new or strange that the dispersed preached to the Hellenists; whereas it was a remarkable and most important fact that they preached to the Greeks, or uncircumcised Gentiles. Ver. 25. Ὁ Βαρνάβας, found in E, G, H, is wanting in the more important MSS. A, B, D, κ, and is accordingly rejected by Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Meyer. Ver. 26. Αὐτούς after ἐγένετο δέ is found in G, H; whereas A, B, E, κ read αὐτοῖς, the reading adopted by Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Bornemann. Ver. 28. The feminine μεγάλην . . . ἦτις, found in A, B, κ, is by Lachmann, Winer, and Tischendorf preferred to the masculine μέγαν . . . ὅστις, found in D, G, H. Καίσαρος, found in E, G, H, is wanting in A, B, D, κ, and is rejected by recent critics.

#### EXEGETICAL REMARKS.

Ver. 19. Οἱ μὲν οὖν διασπαρέντες—*Then they who were dispersed.* Οὖν—*then*, a connective particle. Some (Kuinoel, Schneckenburger, Lange) suppose that this section is directly connected with the conversion of Cornelius; that, in consequence of the intelligence of his conversion, the preachers of the dispersion addressed themselves to the Greeks, or uncircumcised Gentiles. Olshausen, although he does not go the length of maintaining such a direct connection, supposes the force of οὖν to be that Luke would indicate that "this first attempt to preach the gospel to the Gentiles was speedily followed by others." The passage is rather to be considered as a resumption of the narrative of the labours of the preachers of the dispersion: indeed, the precise words by which they are here described, οἱ μὲν οὖν διασπαρέντες, occur in Acts viii. 4. Luke had there informed us that these evangelists went everywhere preaching the word in the districts of Judea and Samaria; and now he relates a further progress which the gospel made in consequence of this dis-



persion: "Now they who were dispersed travelled as far as Phœnicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch." Ἀπὸ τῆς θλίψεως—*owing to the persecution*: in consequence of it. Τῆς γενομένης ἐπὶ Στεφάνῳ—which arose concerning Stephen. So Erasmus, Beza, Luther, Castalio, Meyer, De Wette. Others (Heinrichs, Kuinœl, Olshausen, Humphry) render it *after Stephen*—*post Stephanum*: an admissible translation, but perhaps not so suitable.<sup>1</sup>

Διήλθον ἕως Φοινίκης—*travelled as far as Phœnicia*. Phœnicia was a district lying along the coast of the Mediterranean, to the north of Palestine. It is supposed to have received its name on account of the palm trees with which it abounded.<sup>2</sup> The native name of the district seems to have been Canaan, as it was the only part of ancient Canaan which was never subdued by the Israelites (Matt. xv. 21, 22). Its extent varied at different times. It is generally given as 120 miles long, with an average breadth of 15 miles, extending from the mouth of the river Eleutherus on the north to Mount Carmel on the south. Its chief cities were Tyre, Sidon, Berytus (the modern Beirût), Byblus, and Tripolis. Formerly Phœnicia was the most commercial country in the world; but in the days of the apostles its commerce had somewhat declined, as Antioch to the north and Cæsarea to the south had arisen as rivals to Tyre. Under the Romans, it formed part of the province of Syria. We are here informed that those who were dispersed preached the gospel in Phœnicia; and we have elsewhere in the Acts incidental notices of there being Christians in its two principal cities, Tyre (Acts xxi. 4) and Sidon (Acts xxvii. 3). Καὶ Κύπρον—and Cyprus. We defer our remarks on this large and fertile island until Acts xiii., where we have an account of its being visited by the great Christian missionaries Paul and Barnabas.

Καὶ Ἀντιοχείας—and Antioch. This celebrated city is, next to Jerusalem, the most important in the apostolic

<sup>1</sup> See Winer's *Grammar of the New Testament*, p. 410.

<sup>2</sup> According to others, it derived its name from the purple dye for which it was so celebrated.

history; for as the church of Jerusalem may be said to be the mother church of the Jewish Christians, so the church of Antioch may be said to be the mother church of the Gentile Christians. It was at Antioch that the first Gentile church was formed; and from it, as his starting-place, Paul set out on his three great missionary journeys (Acts xiii. 1, 4, xv. 40, xviii. 22, 23). Antioch was situated on the banks of the river Orontes, about sixteen miles from the Mediterranean, with which it communicated by means of its port Seleucia (Strabo, xvi. 2. 7). It was built partly on a level, and partly on the northern slope of Mount Silpius. The situation was well chosen both for maritime commerce and inland traffic. "It united," as Howson remarks, "the inland advantages of Aleppo with the maritime opportunities of Smyrna."<sup>1</sup>

Antioch was founded by Seleucus Nicator about three hundred years before Christ, and received its name in honour of his father Antiochus. Under the Seleucidæ kings of Syria it flourished as their capital. It was composed of four cities joined in one, hence called by Strabo Tetrapolis (Strabo, xvi. 2. 4), and was surrounded by a wall fifty feet high and fifteen feet broad. Its principal street, formed by Antiochus Epiphanes, was four miles in length, adorned on either side with colonnades. The Jews formed no inconsiderable part of the population. Josephus tells us that Seleucus Nicator made them free citizens, and gave them equal privileges with the Greeks and Macedonians. They were permitted to live under their own laws; and as in Alexandria, they had their own governor, known by the name of Alabarch. They were also very successful in making proselytes among the Greeks (*Ant.* xii. 3. 1; *Bell. Jud.* vii. 3. 3). Under the Romans the prosperity of Antioch increased. Pompey made it a free city, and it became the capital of the important province of Syria. "Antioch," says Strabo, "is not much inferior in riches and magnitude to Seleucia on the Tigris, and Alexandria in Egypt" (xvi. 2. 5). "Antioch," observes Josephus, "is the metropolis of Syria, and without

<sup>1</sup> Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*, p. 149.

dispute deserves the place of the third city of the habitable earth under the Roman empire, both in magnitude and also in other marks of prosperity" (*Bell. Jud.* iii. 2. 4).<sup>1</sup> In the third century it is said to have had a population of 300,000 free citizens; which, allowing for a nearly equal number of slaves, gave a population of upwards of half a million. The population must have been mixed—composed of Syrians, Greeks, Romans, and Jews: the Greek language would, however, predominate as the vehicle of ordinary communication. Antioch is described as the abode of luxury and wealth, and as excelling all other oriental cities in the magnificence of its palaces. After the establishment of Christianity it became one of the five patriarchates—Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Jerusalem being the other four. War and natural convulsions were the cause first of its decline, and at length of its ruin. It is said to have been eleven times taken and pillaged, and four times destroyed by earthquakes. In one earthquake, which occurred in the reign of Justinian, A.D. 526, 250,000 are said to have perished (Gibbon, ch. xliii.). The once flourishing capital of the East has now become a wretched town: its splendid buildings are reduced to hovels; the immense population of 500,000 is now diminished to scarcely 10,000; and nothing but its ruins remain as evidence of its former greatness.<sup>2</sup>

Μηδεὺν λαλοῦντες τὸν λόγον εἰ μὴ μόνον Ἰουδαίοις — *preaching the word to none but to the Jews only.* At first, and probably for a considerable time, the preachers of the dispersion restricted themselves to the Jews and Jewish

<sup>1</sup> The two cities superior to Antioch were Rome and Alexandria. "Antioch and Alexandria," observes Gibbon, "looked down with disdain on a crowd of dependent cities, and yielded with reluctance to the majesty of Rome alone" (*Roman History*, ch. ii.).

<sup>2</sup> For accounts of Antioch, see Winer's *biblisches Realwörterbuch*; Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*; Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*; Merivale's *History of the Romans under the Empire*, vol. v. p. 14, second edition; Lewin's *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, vol. i. p. 107 ff.; and Renan's *Les Apôtres*, ch. xii. Maps of ancient Antioch, taken from Malela, otherwise called John of Antioch, are given by Lewin, and Conybeare and Howson.

proselytes. Like the other preachers, they still considered it unlawful to preach to the Gentiles: they were ignorant of the great truth, that the Gentiles should be received into the church of Christ without circumcision; a truth of which the apostles themselves were ignorant, until it was miraculously revealed to Peter.

Ver. 20. *Τινες ἐξ αὐτῶν*—*some of them*; i.e. not some of the Jews (Kuinoel), but some of the preachers of the dispersion. *Ἄνδρες Κύπριοι καὶ Κυρηναῖοι*—*Cyprians and Cyrenians*; i.e. natives of the island of Cyprus, and of the city of Cyrene in Africa, consequently Hellenistic Jews. The Hellenists, by coming in frequent contact with men of other nations, were more liberal-minded than the Hebrews; and consequently they were the first to break through the restraints of Jewish legalism. Among the Cyprian Jews, mention has already been made of Barnabas. The Cyrenian Jews were present at the day of Pentecost, and had a synagogue of their own at Jerusalem; and among the preachers at Antioch there is special mention of Lucius of Cyrene.

*Ἐλάλουν καὶ τοὺς Ἕλληνας*—*spoke to the Greeks*. See Critical Note to this verse. The two rival readings are: *Ἑλληνιστάς*, the Hellenists or Greek Jews; and *Ἕλληνας*, the Greeks, or uncircumcised Gentiles. The decided preponderance of external evidence is in favour of *Ἑλληνιστάς*: only two uncial MSS., the Alexandrian and the Bezae, read *Ἕλληνας*; yet there are strong reasons for adopting this latter as the true reading, inasmuch as it alone conveys an intelligible meaning. 1. There was nothing worthy of remark in these men preaching to the Hellenists, who had long before this been received into the Christian church; whereas their preaching to the Gentiles was a new feature of the case. 2. There is an implied contrast between ver. 19 and ver. 20. At first, those who were dispersed preached only to the Jews; but afterwards some of them preached to others who were not Jews. But there is no contrast between the Jews and the Hellenists: indeed, the Hellenists are included in the general term *Ἰουδαῖοι*; whereas there is a decided contrast between the Jews and the Greeks—the circumcised



and the uncircumcised. For these reasons the reading "*Ἑλληνας*, though more feebly attested, has been generally adopted by modern critics. So Griesbach, Bengel, Lachmann, Tischendorf, Bornemann, De Wette, Wieseler, Meyer, Lechler, Alford, etc.

The time of this occurrence is a matter of dispute. Some hold that it took place before the conversion of Cornelius, and that in reality this preaching of the gospel to the Greeks at Antioch was the first call of the Gentiles. But this is doubtful: Peter, it would seem, distinctly claims to have been the first to preach to the Gentiles (Acts xv. 7). Others think that it was in consequence of information concerning the conversion of Cornelius; Peter's example having emboldened them to speak to the Greeks. But there is no hint of this in the text. It would rather appear that this preaching was spontaneous on the part of the Hellenistic teachers. It would seem that both events were nearly simultaneous, and independent of each other; the preaching of Peter to Cornelius being, however, the first in point of time. The idea was dawning upon the church that the gospel should be preached to the Gentiles; and this occurred in two different places, at Cæsarea and Antioch, about the same time, without any connection with each other,—just as the Reformation arose almost simultaneously and independently in Germany, Switzerland, and France.

Ver. 22. *Ἡκούσθη δὲ ὁ λόγος*, etc.—*But the report concerning them came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem.* The church in Jerusalem, as the mother church, seems to have exercised at this time a general superintendence over the other churches. The news of the conversion of Cornelius had probably before this reached Jerusalem; perhaps Peter had already made his defence; and thus the prejudices of the strict Jews toward preaching the gospel to the Gentiles would be somewhat abated. *Ἐξαπέστειλαν Βαρνάβαν διελθεῖν ἕως Ἀντιοχείας*—*they sent forth Barnabas to go as far as Antioch.* Two remarkable points of difference are observable between this mission of Barnabas to Antioch, and the mission of Peter and John to Samaria. 1. The apostles sent

Peter and John ; whereas the church in Jerusalem, as a body, sent Barnabas. 2. Those who were sent to Samaria were original apostles ; whereas it was Barnabas, a man of note indeed among the brethren, but not one of the original apostles, who was sent to Antioch. Perhaps by this time most of the apostles had left Jerusalem. Barnabas was, however, in all respects a suitable person for such a mission, both on account of his personal character (ver. 24), and because he was connected with those Cyprian and Cyrenian Jews who now preached to the Greeks, being himself a Hellenist, and a native of Cyprus. By sending Barnabas, the church in Jerusalem showed the apostolic conception of the Christian church. They wished to preserve unity among the disciples, to draw all believers together, and thus to guard against Christianity being split up into a number of small sects : the Jewish and Gentile Christians were to be the members of the same community.<sup>1</sup> The object of the mission of Barnabas was to examine into the facts of the case, to guard against any abuses that might possibly have occurred, and especially to prevent all schism and divisions ; for there was a danger of a Gentile Christian church at Antioch springing up, as a rival to a Jewish Christian church at Jerusalem,—a danger which, under Providence, this mission of Barnabas averted.

Vers. 23, 24. Barnabas, when he came to Antioch, found nothing to correct, but much to rejoice in. When he saw the grace of God, as it appeared in the numerous conversions of the Gentiles, he rejoiced, and exhorted them with full purpose of heart to cleave to the Lord. *Παρεκάλει*—*he exhorted*. Compare Acts iv. 36, *υἱὸς παρακλήσεως*. "*Οτι—because*. This refers not to the reason why the church of Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch, but to the reason why Barnabas rejoiced at the success of the gospel among the Gentiles. *Ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός*—*a good man* ; referring not merely to his uprightness of character (Meyer), but to the benevolence of his disposition—*a benevolent man*. This is the evident meaning of *ἀγαθός* in Rom. v. 7, where it is distinguished

<sup>1</sup> See Olshausen *on the Gospels and Acts*, vol. iv. p. 378.

from δίκαιος. His benevolence effectually prevented him censuring anything that might be new or strange in these preachers to the Gentiles, and caused him to rejoice in their success, and in the remarkable proofs of the divine blessing upon their labours.

Ver. 25. Ἐξῆλθεν δὲ εἰς Ταρσὸν ἀναζητῆσαι Σαῦλον—*Then he departed to Tarsus to seek Saul.* The conversion of numerous Gentiles rendered additional assistance necessary for their instruction. Hence the thoughts of Barnabas were directed toward Paul, with whose miraculous conversion he was intimately acquainted. "He needed assistance. He needed the presence of one whose wisdom was higher than his own, whose zeal was an example to all, and whose peculiar mission (to the Gentiles) had been miraculously declared."<sup>1</sup> We were already informed that Paul, on his departure from Jerusalem, went to Tarsus (Acts ix. 30). How long he had been in Tarsus before Barnabas sought him, is wholly uncertain. Burton supposes a lengthened residence of nine years; whereas Wieseler shortens the period to six months or a year.<sup>2</sup> Anger fixes it at two years. It is improbable that, having already entered upon his apostolic career in Jerusalem, he would have remained long in obscurity in Tarsus: a year, or a year and a half, was probably the utmost. Accordingly, four or five years would have elapsed since Paul's conversion.

Ver. 26. Χρηματίσαι τε πρῶτον ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ τοὺς μαθητὰς Χριστιανούς—and *that the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.* Χρηματίσαι depends upon ἐγένετο. Χρηματίζειν, to transact business, to negotiate on state affairs, to intimate the response of an oracle; and in later Greek, to give a name, to be called. (See note to Acts x. 22.) Some (Benson, Doddridge) render it, "were called by divine appointment;" but if this were its meaning, the name "Christians" would have more frequently occurred in the mouth of believers themselves. It is only once more used in the New Testament in the sense of *to be called* (μοιχαλὶς χρηματίσει,

<sup>1</sup> Conybeare and Howson, vol. i. p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> Wieseler's *Chronologie des apostolischen Zeitalters*, p. 147.

Rom. vii. 3).<sup>1</sup> The name "Christians" was first given to the disciples at Antioch, but by whom is not mentioned. It is improbable that it was given by the disciples themselves. The name only occurs twice again in the New Testament, and in both instances as proceeding from those who were not Christians. Thus Agrippa said to Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" (Acts xxvi. 28); and Peter says, "If any man suffer as a Christian (the name given to them by their enemies), let him not be ashamed" (1 Pet. iv. 16). If it had originated in the church, we would have expected its more frequent occurrence. The names by which believers distinguished themselves were οἱ πιστοί, οἱ μαθηταί, οἱ ἀδελφοί, οἱ ἄγιοι, οἱ τῆς ὁδοῦ. Still less can we suppose that it was given them by the Jews. It is not to be imagined that they would give the sacred name Χριστός to those whom they regarded as heretics and apostates. The name which they applied to them was οἱ Ναζωραῖοι (Acts xxiv. 5), a term of contempt. It therefore remains that the name proceeded from the Gentiles. Its form is in favour of this. The Romans called a political or religious body by the name of its leader or founder; as, for example, the Herodians, the Epicureans, etc. So we read in the civil wars of the Pompeians and Cæsarians, and under the empire of the Othonians and Vitellians. Ewald supposes that the name was given by the Roman government at Antioch; but such a supposition is unnecessary: for although the word is of Roman origin, yet the Greeks would naturally adopt the Latin form of their political rulers. It would seem that the Gentiles, mistaking the appellative ὁ Χριστός for a personal name, used the term Χριστιανοί to denote those who believed that Jesus was the Christ. Believers were called Christians, not Jesuits.<sup>2</sup> So Tacitus: *Vulgus Christianos appellabat. Auctor nominis ejus Christus, Tiberio imperitante, per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio affectus erat* (Ann. xv. 44). The bestowal of the name is a proof of the great progress

<sup>1</sup> See Olshausen *on the Gospels and the Acts*, vol. i. p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> It is singular that whereas Christian is an honourable name, Jesuit is frequently used as a term of contempt.



which Christianity had made among the Gentiles. So long as Christianity was confined to the Jews and Jewish proselytes, the Christians would not be distinguished from them, and would be regarded by the Gentiles as a Jewish sect; but now the fact that numerous Gentiles were received without circumcision into the church was a proof that Christianity was different from Judaism; and thus the disciples could no longer be regarded in the same point of view as the Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes, and other Jewish sects. Hence arose the necessity of a distinctive name; and no name could be more appropriate than that of their great Founder. Some suppose that the name was given in a spirit of ridicule;<sup>1</sup> but there is no reason for this supposition, except that from a few notices it would appear that the people of Antioch were famed for their wit. There does not appear to have been anything sarcastic in the name itself. But although, in all probability, the name proceeded from the enemies of the church, yet believers not only soon adopted it, but gloried in it: it became the name above every name; believers suffered martyrdom rather than renounce it; and the declaration, "I am a Christian," was their noble confession before their heathen persecutors.

Ver. 27. *Κατῆλθον ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων*—*came from Jerusalem*. Not fled from Jerusalem (Ewald), as the persecution had long before this ceased; nor sent by the church of Jerusalem, of which there is no intimation; but came of their own voluntary impulse. *Προφῆται*—*prophets*. These inspired teachers are frequently mentioned in the New Testament. They appear to have exercised their gifts in supernatural teaching; having a divine insight into the truths of the gospel; piercing with the eye of the soul into spiritual realities. The mere foretelling of the future does not seem with them, any more than with the prophets of the Old Testament, to have been an essential part of their prophetic gifts.

Ver. 28. *Ἀγαβος* — *Agabus*. Agabus at this time must have been comparatively a young man, as twenty years

<sup>1</sup> As in modern times the names Quakers, Puritans, Methodists, etc.

afterwards he is mentioned as coming from Jerusalem on purpose to warn Paul not to approach that city (Acts xxi. 10). Some, without reason, suppose that he was one of the seventy disciples; according to tradition, he suffered martyrdom at Antioch. Ἐσήμανεν διὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος—*signified by the Spirit*. The prophecy of Agabus is characterized as a real prediction—a revelation of the Holy Ghost. Hence all natural explanations are to be rejected as contrary to the text; as that the famine had already commenced, or that Agabus saw the symptoms of it in deficiency of the crop and in dearness of provisions (Eichhorn, Heinrichs, Winer). Ἐφ' ὅλην τὴν οἰκουμένην—*over the whole empire*. Different meanings have been given to this expression. Some translate it, *over the whole land*, and suppose that the land of Palestine is meant.<sup>1</sup> But these words were spoken to the Gentiles at Antioch: therefore, although ἡ οἰκουμένη might mean “the habitable land,” yet they could not understand that Palestine was meant by it; it would be more natural in them to refer it to Syria. The word is commonly used by Greek and Roman writers to signify the Greek and Roman world, and is hence employed to signify the Roman empire. Ἦτις καὶ ἐγένετο ἐπὶ Κλαυδίου—*which also came to pass in the reign of Claudius*. Claudius reigned thirteen years, from the year 41 to 54. In his reign, and therefore within these years, this famine took place. It is not implied that this prediction of Agabus was made before Claudius commenced to reign, but it is merely an intimation by the historian when the famine occurred.

The reign of Claudius was disastrous, by reason of the number of famines which occurred in it. History records four. In his first and second years (A.D. 41, 42) there was a great famine in Rome (Dion Cass. ix. p. 949); in his fourth year (A.D. 44), Josephus mentions a great famine which prevailed in Judea (*Ant.* xx. 2. 5); in his tenth year (A.D. 50), Eusebius records a great famine in Greece (Euseb. *Chron.* i. 39); and in his twelfth year (A.D. 52), Rome was again visited by so severe a famine, that the people rose in

<sup>1</sup> See this opinion ably maintained by Lardner, vol. i. pp. 132–134.

rebellion, and Claudius was in imminent danger of his life (Tacitus, *Ann.* xii. 43; Suetonius, *Vit. Claud.* xix.). These famines appear to have been local; but their frequency proves that there must have been a scarcity over the whole empire. The particular one here alluded to was probably that which visited Judea in the years 44, 45; for it was to Judea that the disciples of Antioch sent assistance. This famine, Josephus tells us, occurred when Cuspius Fadus and Tiberius Alexander were governors of Judea. Now Fadus came to Judea on the death of Herod Agrippa I., in the autumn of 44, and Tiberius Alexander succeeded him about a year and a half afterwards. This famine was so severe, that many died for want of food. It was relieved by the generosity of Helena queen of Adiabene, and of her son Izates, Jewish proselytes, then in Jerusalem. Helena, Josephus informs us, bought corn at great expense in Cyprus and Egypt, and caused it to be distributed among those who were in need (Joseph. *Ant.* xx. 2. 5; 5. 2.) Eusebius alludes to the same famine; and he adds: "You will find this statement in accordance with the Acts of the Apostles, where it is said that, according to the ability of the disciples at Antioch, they determined each one to send to the assistance of those in Judea" (Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* ii. 12).

Ver. 29. *Τοῖς κατοικοῦσιν ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ἀδελφοῖς*—*to the brethren dwelling in Judea.* It is disputed whether this relief was sent to Judea before the famine broke out, in dependence on the prophecy of Agabus, or after it had commenced. Neander and Baumgarten adopt the former view; Wieseler, Lechler, and Meyer, the latter.<sup>1</sup> The latter view has been supported by the following considerations: Until the famine had commenced, the disciples could not have known that Judea was the place specially adverted to in the general prophecy of Agabus; and until the occasion arose, the relief would be unnecessary. Besides, it would seem from the next chapter, that Barnabas and Paul were in Jerusalem with their contribution shortly after the death of Herod Agrippa (Acts xii. 25); and according to Josephus, the famine then com-

<sup>1</sup> See Wieseler's *Chronologie*, p. 149.

menced. The Gentile Christians, in thus sending assistance to the brethren of Judea, manifested a spirit of true Christian liberality: they felt deeply indebted to them for spiritual benefits, and therefore they embraced the opportunity of repaying them in temporal gifts (Rom. xv. 27). Some suppose that the Christians in Jerusalem had become impoverished by reason of the community of goods established among them; but whatever prejudicial effect such an institution might have had upon the wealth of the church, this relief was sent, not on account of this impoverishment, but to meet a temporary necessity. As Queen Helena ministered to the wants of the Jews in general during the famine, so did these Christians of Antioch minister to the wants of their Jewish brethren, who, on account of their religion, might have been neglected in the national distribution.

Ver. 30. *Ἀποστέλλαντες πρὸς τοὺς πρεσβύτερους*—*sending it to the elders*. This is the first time that the elders are mentioned in the Acts. We have no account of the origin of the eldership, as we have of the deaconship. It is generally supposed to have been instituted after the pattern of the Jewish elders attached to the synagogues. Some suppose that by the elders here the Jewish elders are meant, and that the collection was sent, not specially to the Christians, but to the Jews in general. Others think that Christians are meant, those who still retained the office of elder in the synagogues. But certainly the most natural interpretation is, that the elders or overseers of the Christian church are here meant. *Οἱ πρεσβύτεροι* are in the New Testament identical with *οἱ ἐπίσκοποι*. See Acts xx. 17, 28; Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. i. 5, 7; 1 Pet. v. 1, 2. So Theodoret, on Phil. i. 1, observes: *Ἐπισκόπους τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους καλεῖ ἀμφοτέρα γὰρ εἶχον κατ' ἐκείνουν τὸν καιρὸν τὰ ὀνόματα* (quoted by Meyer). So Alford observes: "The title *ἐπίσκοπος*, as applied to one person superior to the *πρεσβύτεροι*, and answering to our bishop, appears to have been unknown in the apostolic times."

*Διὰ χειρὸς Βαρνάβα καὶ Σαύλου*—*by the hands of Barnabas and Saul*. Here a difficulty occurs. How are we to explain



this second visit of Paul, after his conversion, to Jerusalem, with what he himself says in Gal. ii. 1? According to the account in the Epistle to the Galatians, he went up to Jerusalem three years after his conversion, when he continued for fifteen days; and fourteen years after that, he went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas. Some (Zeller, Meyer) hold that these accounts are utterly irreconcilable, and that there is an error here in Luke's history. Neander also expresses himself in a doubtful manner. "What conclusion," he asks, "must we draw from this, relative to the account in the Acts? Nothing more than this: that the tradition which Luke followed, and which united Paul and Barnabas in their labours at this period, joined them here together, although for some reason this was an exception; or else Paul might have been chosen as a delegate, but some unknown circumstance might have prevented his taking the journey. At least we can more easily admit an oversight here, than resolve to do violence to Paul's own declaration."<sup>1</sup> Various attempts have been made at a solution of this difficulty. De Wette supposes that both Paul and Barnabas went into Judea, but that Barnabas only went to Jerusalem. But this is an evasion of the difficulty; for, as Zeller observes, "if we are constrained, in spite of the assertion of the author, to affirm that Paul was not at Jerusalem, what assurance have we that Barnabas went thither, and that the whole narrative has any historical foundation?"<sup>2</sup> Both Paul and Barnabas must have gone to Jerusalem; for we are expressly told that they returned from it (Acts xii. 25). Schleiermacher supposes that this journey of the eleventh chapter is identical with that of the fifteenth chapter, and that it was originally mentioned in ch. xi. 30 in anticipation, but that the compiler of the Acts mistook it for a separate journey, and by ch. xii. 25 represented it as such. But such a supposition does not lessen the difficulty, but only removes it to another place: it still supposes an error on the part of Luke. Others, again, think that this journey, and not that mentioned in ch. xv., is

<sup>1</sup> Neander's *Planting*, vol. ii. p. 105.

<sup>2</sup> Zeller's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 223.

the same as the one mentioned in Gal. ii. But the dates do not correspond. This journey took place shortly after the death of Herod Agrippa I., and consequently in the year 44, which by no calculation will admit of being fourteen years after Paul's conversion, as was the case with the journey mentioned in Galatians. The true solution seems to be, that Paul in his epistle does not mention all his visits to Jerusalem, but only those which were of importance for the object he had in view—the establishment of his apostolic office. There may have been other visits not mentioned during the fourteen years which intervened between the two visits of which he writes. Now in this visit it does not appear that he met with the apostles, but only with the elders: Peter at least was absent, having retired from Jerusalem after his miraculous release from prison (Acts xii. 17). When, then, we consider the purpose Paul had in view in the Epistle to the Galatians, and the nature of this visit, the *argumentum a silentio* cannot be applied as an objection against its occurrence. This view of the subject is adopted by Ewald, Baumgarten, Lechler, and Lange.

## SECTION XXV.

### PERSECUTION BY HEROD.—Acts xii. 1-19.

1 Now, about that time, Herod the king laid hands on certain of the church to vex them. 2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. 3 And seeing that it was pleasing to the Jews, he proceeded to seize on Peter also. Then were the days of unleavened bread. 4 Whom having apprehended, he put in prison, delivering him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him, intending after the passover to bring him forth to the people. 5 Peter therefore was kept in the prison; but earnest prayer was made by the church to God concerning him. 6 But when Herod was about to bring him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains; and the keepers before the door guarded the prison. 7 And, behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the room; and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. 8 And the angel said to him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And he did so. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. 9 And having gone out, he followed him; and did not know that it was true which was done by the angel; but he thought he saw a vision. 10 And having passed through the first and second watch, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city; which opened to them of its own accord: and having gone out, they went along one street; and immediately the angel departed from him. 11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I certainly know that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. 12 And having become aware of it, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, surnamed Mark; where many were assembled, and were praying. 13 And as he knocked at the door of the gate, a maid came to hearken, named Rhoda. 14 And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for joy; but running in, told how Peter stood before the gate. 15 And they said to her, Thou art mad. But she affirmed confidently that it was so. Then they said, It is his angel. 16 But Peter continued knocking: and having opened, they saw him, and were astonished. 17 But he, beckoning to them with the hand to be silent, related how the Lord had brought him out of prison. And he said, Tell these things to James and the brethren.

And he departed, and went to another place. 18 But when it was day, there was no small commotion among the soldiers as to what had become of Peter. 19 And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and ordered them to be led to execution.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

Ver. 5. Ἐκτενής, found in E, G, H, is preferred by Tischendorf and Lachmann to ἐκτενώς, found in A, B,  $\aleph$ . Περὶ, found in A, B, D,  $\aleph$ , is preferred by Tischendorf and Lachmann to ὑπέρ, found in E, G, H. Ver. 8. The simple verb ζῶσαι of A, B, D,  $\aleph$ , is preferred by Tischendorf and Lachmann to the compound verb περιζῶσαι, found in E, G, H. Ver. 13. Αὐτοῦ before τὴν θύραν, found in A, B, D,  $\aleph$ , is by recent editors preferred to τοῦ Πέτρου, attested by E, G, H.

## EXEGETICAL REMARKS.

Ver. 1. Κατ' ἐκείνον δὲ τὸν καιρὸν—*Now about that time.* The date of this persecution by Herod was A.D. 44, the year in which he died. The time here referred to is the one year's residence of Paul and Barnabas at Antioch, before their visit to Jerusalem; as the famine, for the relief of which they were sent, did not happen until after the death of Herod, when Fadus was governor of Judea. (See Wieseler's *Chronologie*, p. 152.)

Ἡρώδης ὁ βασιλεύς—*Herod the king.* This monarch, called by Josephus, Agrippa, and commonly known by the name of Herod Agrippa I., was the son of Aristobulus, and the grandson of Herod the Great; he was the nephew of Herod Antipas, the brother of Herodias, and the father of that Agrippa before whom Paul made his defence. Sent at an early age to Rome, he obtained the favour of the Emperor Tiberius, and was educated along with his son Drusus. Toward the close of that emperor's reign he fell into disgrace, on account of paying open court to Caius Caligula; and in consequence of using some unguarded expressions he



was cast into prison, where he remained for six months, until the death of Tiberius. Caius Caligula, on his accession to the imperial throne, set him at liberty, changed his iron chain for one of gold of the same weight, and bestowed upon him the tetrarchies of Philip (Iturea and Trachonitis), and of Lysanias (Abilene), with the title of king (*Ant.* xviii. 6. 10). This excited the envy of his uncle Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, who also coveted the royal dignity. In order to obtain it he repaired to Rome, but was there accused by his rival Agrippa with such effect, that Herod Antipas was banished to Lyons, and the tetrarchy of Galilee was added to the dominions of Agrippa (*Ant.* xviii. 7. 2; *Bell. Jud.* ii. 9. 6). After the murder of Caligula, Herod took an active part in securing the succession of Claudius, and for this important service was rewarded by the gift of Samaria and Judea (*Ant.* xix. 5. 1). Thus Judea was for a short period partially freed from the Roman yoke, and had in Herod Agrippa for the last time a monarch of its own. He ruled over all the territories which were formerly possessed by his grandfather Herod the Great; and to these were added Abilene, or the kingdom of Lysanias (*Bell. Jud.* ii. 11. 5). The revenue which he derived out of these dominions was very great. According to Josephus, it amounted to twelve millions of drachmæ (*Ant.* xix. 8. 3), a sum which has been calculated to be equal to £425,000 sterling. He is described by Josephus as an excellent monarch, mild in his temper, and liberal to all men; generous in his tastes, and desirous of securing the good opinion of his subjects; not cruel like his grandfather, but of a gentle and compassionate disposition; loving to reside in Jerusalem, and strict in his observance of the Mosaic law (*Ant.* xix. 7. 3). This character is certainly drawn by a partial pen. Herod Agrippa was evidently a man of considerable ability, but crafty and extravagant, and always acting with a selfish regard to his own interests. He may not have had the splendid talents of his grandfather, but his reign was not stained by many acts of cruelty. His reign was of short duration: he ruled four years under Caligula, during three of them over the tetrarchies

of Philip and Lysanias, and in the fourth year Galilee was added to his government; but the duration of his reign over the whole of Palestine, under Claudius, amounted only to three years (*Ant.* xix. 8. 2). Although he left a son, the Agrippa of the Acts, yet he did not succeed; and with the death of Herod the Jewish kingdom became for ever extinct. Judea was again reduced to a Roman province, and Cuspius Fadus was sent as its governor.<sup>1</sup>

*Ἐπέβαλεν τὰς χεῖρας*—*laid hands on*. Not to be taken in the sense of *ἐπεχείρησε* (Acts ix. 29), *attempted* (Heinrichs, Kuinöel), but in the ordinary sense of the words, *laid hands on*. Herod seized on certain of the members of the church, in order to maltreat them. The full construction is, *ἐπέβαλεν τὰς χεῖρας ἐπὶ τινὰς τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας τοῦ κακῶσαι αὐτούς* (Alford). *Κακῶσαι τινὰς τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας*—*to vex certain of the church*. The enemies of the church had now increased in numbers and influence. At first they were confined to the members of the Sanhedrim, especially the Sadducean faction, whilst the people were favourable. Afterwards, in the persecution which arose about Stephen, the people and their rulers united; but still the civil power in the hands of the Romans was not hostile. But now the civil power in the person of Herod is combined with the ecclesiastical power of the chief priests and the fanaticism of the people, against the disciples of Christ.

Ver. 2. *Ἀνεῖλεν δὲ Ἰάκωβον τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἰωάννου*—*he slew James the brother of John*. This was James the son of Zebedee, called “the Elder,” to distinguish him from the other apostle of the same name, James the son of Alphæus. He was one of Christ’s three favourite disciples who only were permitted to witness the raising of the daughter of Jairus, the transfiguration, and the agony in the garden. He was the first of the apostles who suffered martyrdom. Our Lord’s prediction concerning him was fulfilled. He now drank of the cup of which Christ drank, and was bap-

<sup>1</sup> Coins of Herod Agrippa I. have been preserved, with the inscription, βασιλεὺς μεγας Αγραππας Φιλοκαισαρ. See Akerman’s *Numismatic Illustrations*, p. 38; Madden’s *Jewish Coinage*, p. 106.

tized with the baptism with which He was baptized (Matt. xx. 23). The time of his martyrdom was shortly before the passover of the year 44, and the place was Jerusalem.

Whereas the death of Stephen is described at great length, the martyrdom of James, one of the chief apostles, is related in two words: ἀνέιλεν—μαχαίρῃ. Various reasons have been assigned for this brevity. Lekebusch, with much probability, supposes that Luke's design was to mark the progress of the church; and for this reason he gives the account of Stephen's martyrdom at length, because the disciples, dispersed on account of it, were the bearers of the gospel to a distance; whereas no such effect followed the martyrdom of James: it was not the signal of a new persecution, by which an impulse was given to the diffusion of the gospel.<sup>1</sup> Meyer thinks that Luke intended to write a third history, in which he would give a narrative of the labours of the other apostles, besides Peter and Paul, and that he reserved for it the account of the death of James.<sup>2</sup> Baumgarten thinks that Luke had nothing further to relate; that James died without giving any testimony. Ecclesiastical tradition, however, has supplied what was apparently wanting in Luke's narrative. Clemens Alexandrinus tells us that the man who led James to the judgment-seat was converted by his testimony, and confessed himself a Christian. Both were led away to die. On the way he entreated James to forgive him, who replied, "Peace be to thee," and kissed him; and then both were beheaded at the same time (Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* ii. 9).

*Μαχαίρῃ—with the sword.* The Romans had deprived the Jews of the power of life and death; but Judea was at this time under the rule of a native prince who possessed that power. Slaying with the sword was a Roman form of punishment; but according to Lightfoot, it had been adopted by the later Jews, and was regarded by them as a disgraceful death.<sup>3</sup> John the Baptist was slain in a similar manner by Herod Antipas.

<sup>1</sup> Lekebusch's *Quellen der Apostelgeschichte*, pp. 218, 219.

<sup>2</sup> Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 247.

<sup>3</sup> Lightfoot's *Horæ Hebraicæ*, vol. iv. p. 105.

Ver. 3. Ἰδὼν δὲ ὅτι ἀρεστόν ἐστιν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις—and *seeing that it was pleasing to the Jews*. Josephus tells us that Herod Agrippa was greatly desirous of popularity. He had before his accession to the throne of Judea gained the favour of the Jews, by employing his influence, at great personal risk, to dissuade Caligula from erecting his statue in the temple of Jerusalem. He fixed his chief residence in Jerusalem, and was strict in the observance of the Mosaic law. To please the inhabitants of Jerusalem, he relieved them of the house-tax, and erected splendid public buildings. He also commenced to surround the city with a new wall, so as to render it impregnable. "This king," observes Josephus, "was by nature very liberal in his gifts, and ambitious to oblige people with large donations; and he rendered himself illustrious by the many costly presents he made. He took delight in giving, and rejoiced in living in good reputation" (*Ant. xix. 7. 3*).<sup>1</sup> To obtain popular applause was one of the chief motives which influenced the conduct of Herod; and for this reason he sacrificed the life of James, and now desired to sacrifice the life of Peter. It was pleasing to the Jews. The people were now hostile to the Christians. The Pharisees, the popular faction, had declared against them. Perhaps observing the numerous conversions to Christianity, they regarded the Jewish religion as in danger, and looked upon Christians in general, as they did on Stephen, as blasphemers of Moses and of God. The reception also of the Gentiles without circumcision must have increased the Jewish fanaticism. Ἦσαν δὲ αἱ ἡμέραι τῶν ἀζύμων—*Then were the days of unleavened bread*. For seven days at the feast of the passover the Jews had to eat unleavened bread (*Ex. xii. 15*). The passover itself was partaken on the first day, but the feast was continued six days longer; hence it is called "the feast of unleavened bread" (*Ex. xii. 13*).

Ver. 4. Τέσσαρσιν τετραδίοις στρατιωτῶν—to *four quaternions of soldiers*. A quaternion of soldiers was a company of

<sup>1</sup> See an account of Herod Agrippa's popular measures, in Biscoe on the Acts, pp. 48-50.



four, so that there were sixteen who guarded Peter. They would be appointed to guard in turns; four during each of the four watches into which the night was divided. According to some, two soldiers were with Peter within the prison, and two before the door; but according to others, the two soldiers within, who slept with Peter, remained all night, and did not belong to the quaternion who guarded the prison outside. *Μετὰ τὸ πάσχα*—*after the passover*. Wieseler supposes that the day of the passover, the 14th of the month Nisan, was the day of Peter's imprisonment; and that the day after, the 15th, was designed to be the day of his execution.<sup>1</sup> But by *πάσχα* here is meant not merely the day on which the passover was partaken, but the whole paschal feast, which lasted seven days, corresponding with *αἱ ἡμέραι τῶν ἁζύμων*. According to the strict Jews, it was not reckoned lawful to defile their festal days with executions;<sup>2</sup> and Herod Agrippa prided himself on being a strict observer of the law. The rule, however, was not observed in the case of Christ, who was crucified on the paschal week.

Ver. 5. *Ὁ μὲν οὖν Πέτρος ἐτηρεῖτο ἐν τῇ φυλακῇ*—*Peter therefore was kept in prison*. Herod put James to death, and seized on Peter with the intention of slaying him also, because they were the two most prominent leaders of the Christian church in Jerusalem: the one was designated by the Lord "the Son of Thunder," and the other "the Rock." *Ἐκτενής*, *earnest*, a word peculiar to the later Greek (1 Pet. iv. 8). To oppose the power of Herod, the church betakes itself to earnest prayer,—a weapon more powerful than all the resources of the monarch of Judea.

Ver. 6. *Τῇ νυκτὶ ἐκείνῃ*—*on that night*; namely, the night before the day when Herod had resolved to bring him forth to the people. *Μεταξὺ δύο στρατιωτῶν δεδεμένους ἀλύσειν δυσίν*—*between two soldiers, bound with two chains*. It is certainly not said that Peter was chained to these two soldiers, but only that he was bound with two chains. However, we learn that it was the Roman mode of securing prisoners to

<sup>1</sup> Wieseler's *Chronologie des apostolischen Zeitalters*, p. 215.

<sup>2</sup> *Non judicant die festo* was the rule even in the Talmud.

chain them to the arms of soldiers. In general, the prisoner was bound only to one soldier : the soldier, we are informed, had the chain fastened to his left arm, while the prisoner had it fastened to his right. Occasionally, for greater security, the prisoner was bound to two soldiers, one on each side. Thus probably Paul was to be secured, when the chief captain commanded him to be bound with two chains (Acts xxi. 33). Herod himself, when cast into prison by Tiberius, was thus bound ; Josephus speaks “ of the soldier to whom he was bound ” (*Ant.* xviii. 6. 7). This practice of chaining prisoners to soldiers is frequently adverted to by ancient writers ; thus in the *Epistles* of Seneca we read, *Quemadmodum eadem catena et militem et custodiam copulat* (Epist. v.).

Ver. 7. Ἄγγελος Κυρίου—an angel of the Lord; not “ the angel of the Lord,” a phrase which does not occur in the Acts. There was an objective appearance of an angel to Peter, and not a mere impression or vision, as is evident from the narrative. Οἰκήματι—in the room. Not the prison (Meyer), but the cell in which Peter was confined.

Ver. 8. Περιβαλοῦ τὸ ἱμάτιόν σου—Cast thy garment about thee. The cloak or outer garment, which had been cast off before going to sleep. Peter was to do all things leisurely to gird himself, bind on his sandals, and put on his upper garment, as if he were in no danger.

Ver. 9. Ἐξελθών—having gone out ; that is, from his cell. Ἐδόκει δὲ ὄραμα βλέπειν—he thought he saw a vision. He was taken with such surprise, and thrown into such confusion, that he was not aware that what had happened was a real occurrence, but thought that it was a dream. There is a beautiful ecclesiastical legend which this deliverance of Peter recalls to recollection. It is said that, when Peter was in his last imprisonment at Rome, he made his escape ; and as he went along the street, he met the Lord Jesus bearing His cross. Peter asked Him whither He was going ? Our Lord replied, To Rome to be crucified. Peter returned immediately to prison, and on the following day was crucified, and by his own request with his head downwards—considering himself unworthy to suffer death in the same manner as his Master did.

All rationalistic explanations to account for this deliverance of Peter are in direct opposition to the narrative. According to Hezel, a flash of lightning shone into the prison, and loosened the chains of Peter. According to Eichhorn and Heinrichs, the jailor or others, with his knowledge, delivered Peter, without the apostle being conscious to whom he owed his freedom; and as the soldiers are a difficulty in the way of this explanation, they suppose that a sleeping draught was administered to them. All this is mere trifling. Others endeavour to get rid of the miraculous by questioning the correctness of the narrative. Meyer and De Wette think that the truth is here so mixed up with the mythical element, that it is impossible to affirm what actually took place.<sup>1</sup> Baur supposes that Herod himself delivered the apostle, as he found in the interval that the people were not gratified by the death of James, but that, on the contrary, that proceeding had made him unpopular.<sup>2</sup> Neander passes over the narrative with the remark: "By the special providence of God, Peter was delivered from prison."<sup>3</sup> When once the miraculous in the narrative is given up, the only resource is the mythical theory—to call in question the truth of the history—as all natural explanations are wholly unavailing. The narrative here, however, has no resemblance to a myth: there is a naturalness and freshness about it, which remove it from all legends of a mythical description.<sup>4</sup>

Ver. 10. Διελθόντες δὲ πρῶτον φυλακὴν καὶ δευτέραν—*and having passed through the first and second watch.* After leaving his cell, Peter and his angelic guide passed the first and second watch—that is, the other two soldiers of the quaternion who watched before the door. Some, however,

<sup>1</sup> Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 249; De Wette's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 105. So also Dr. Davidson observes: "The basis of the story is some unexpected deliverance of the apostle, which was afterwards set forth in a mythic dress" (*New Introduction*, vol. ii. p. 251).

<sup>2</sup> Baur's *Apostel Paulus*, vol. i. p. 184.

<sup>3</sup> Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. p. 102.

<sup>4</sup> So Renan himself admits: "The account in the Acts," he observes, "is so lively and just, that it is difficult to find any place in it for any prolonged legendary elaboration."

assert that the word *διελθόντες* (passed through) implies that there were more than one soldier who constituted each watch. *Τὴν πύλην τὴν σιδηρᾶν*—*the iron gate*. The gates of fortified places in the East were covered with iron. This was the outside gate, which led from the prison to the street. The prison is supposed to have been the tower of Antonia.

Ver. 11. *Ἐν ἑαυτῷ γενόμενος*—*came to himself*. All was done in such haste, that Peter had no time to recover from his surprise; but now, being left by the angel, and finding himself in the street, he recovered his self-consciousness: he became aware that his deliverance was no dream, but a reality.

Ver. 12. *Συνιδών*—*having become aware*. Not, “when he had considered” (Vulgate, Grotius), either “what he ought to do” (Bengel), or “the state of matters” (Beza); but, when he had become aware of his deliverance from prison. *Συνεῖδω*, to see, or perceive with oneself, hence to become aware. *Τῆς Μαρίας τῆς μητρὸς Ἰωάννου, τοῦ ἐπικαλουμένου Μάρκου*—*of Mary the mother of John, surnamed Mark*. John was a common name among the Jews, and therefore he is distinguished by his Latin surname Marcus. He was, without doubt, the same who accompanied Paul and Barnabas to Cyprus (Acts xii. 25, xiii. 5, xv. 27). He was sister’s son to Barnabas—*ὁ ἀνεψιὸς Βαρνάβα* (Col. iv. 10)—and consequently the Mary here mentioned was the sister of Barnabas.<sup>1</sup> There is no reason to discredit the commonly received opinion, that this Mark was the same whom Peter calls his son (1 Pet. v. 13)—that is, his convert—and who was the author of the second Gospel. *Οὗ ἦσαν ἱκανοὶ συνηθροισμένοι, καὶ προσευχόμενοι*—*where many were assembled, and were praying*. This was a midnight assembly of the Christians, either for fear of their Jewish enemies, or more probably on account of the pressing necessity and importance of the case (ver. 5). The primitive Christians in those times of peril held their sacred assemblies in the night season; and afterwards in peaceful times these nocturnal assemblies were continued, owing to their greater solemnity, and on account

<sup>1</sup> The meaning of *ἀνεψιός* is, however, disputed, many critics rendering it, not “nephew,” but “cousin.”



of a prevalent persuasion that the Lord Jesus would come during the night.

Ver. 13. *Τὴν θύραν τοῦ πυλῶνος*—*the door of the gate*. *Θύρα* is probably the small outside door that formed the entrance from the street into the court or area where the house was; *πυλῶν* was the large door or gate of the particular house.<sup>1</sup> *Ὀνόματι Ῥόδης*—*named Rhoda, or Rose*. The Jews frequently gave to their female children the names of plants and flowers: thus Susannah signifies a lily, Esther a myrtle, and Tamar a palm tree.

Ver. 15. *Ὁ ἄγγελος ἐστὶν αὐτοῦ*—*it is his angel*. Some (Hammond, Basnage, Du Veil) render this, "It is his messenger," and suppose that the disciples thought a messenger had been sent by Peter out of the prison. No doubt this is a common meaning of *ἄγγελος*; but against this interpretation are the considerations, that the disciples could not have expected such a messenger, and that it is expressly said that Rhoda recognised the voice of Peter. Others take *ἄγγελος* in the sense of *πνεῦμα*, and suppose that the disciples thought that it was the spirit of Peter which came to give them a premonition of his death; but the notion that the soul leaves the body of a man before his death does not seem to have been adopted by the Jews, nor would they have employed the word *ἄγγελος* to express it. The only meaning of which the words are capable is—*it is his angel*. The idea of guardian angels is here alluded to. This belief is chiefly founded on these words of our Lord: "I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. xviii. 10). This notion, that each individual has his guardian angel, was strongly maintained by the early Fathers. Thus Chrysostom, in commenting on this passage, observes: "Thus it is true that each one of us has his own angel: *ὅτι ἕκαστος ἡμῶν ἄγγελον ἔχει*." How far the doctrine of guardian angels is scriptural is a difficult question. The words of our Saviour may be interpreted as asserting the guardianship of angels in general, and not that a particular angel is attached to

<sup>1</sup> For another interpretation, see Robinson's *Lexicon*—*θύρα*.

each individual. And as to the phrase in the text, there is in it no announcement of doctrine, but merely the expression of the opinion of those assembled in Mary's house. The belief in guardian angels was not confined to the Jews, but was common both to the Greeks and Romans. Every scholar will recall the famous instance of Socrates.

Ver. 17. Ἀπαγγείλατε Ἰακώβῳ — *announce to James*. This James is doubtless the so-called bishop of Jerusalem, who afterwards is several times mentioned in the Acts and in the Epistle to the Galatians. He appears to have been a person of considerable weight and importance among the apostles. Paul calls him one of the pillars of the church. As to the question whether he was the same with James the son of Alphæus, one of the original apostles, see note at the end of this section.

Ἐξελθὼν ἐπορεύθη εἰς ἕτερον τόπον—*having departed to another place*. Whither Peter betook himself is not mentioned. Meyer thinks that it is not necessary to suppose that he even left the city; for ἐξελθὼν, he observes, does not signify *relictâ urbe*, but *relictâ domo*. But it is not said that he entered into the house, and certainly the natural meaning is that he left the city. The reason of his departure was a regard to personal safety. Baumgarten thinks that this was unworthy of an apostle, and that he left because the tie which bound the apostles to Jerusalem was now broken: "After such abominations, Jerusalem neither could nor ought to be the peculiar and permanent resting-place of the apostles."<sup>1</sup> But this is a reason foreign to the text. Peter was delivered from prison in order to escape danger; and his departure was no cowardice, but merely a compliance with the intimations of Providence. He followed the injunction of Christ: "When they persecute you in one city, flee ye to another."

Ver. 18. Γενομένης δὲ ἡμέρας—but *when it was day*. Peter must have escaped during the last watch, otherwise his departure would have been observed before daybreak, when the guard was changed. If, however, the two soldiers in

<sup>1</sup> Baumgarten's *Apostolic History*, pp. 313, 314.

the cell remained all night, this supposition is unnecessary. *Ἐν τοῖς στρατιώταις*—among the soldiers; that is, among the sixteen soldiers who were appointed to guard Peter, and especially among the particular quaternion who were on guard when Peter made his escape, and who would have the most reason to fear the consequences.

Ver. 19. *Ἐκέλευσεν ἀπαχθῆναι*—ordered them to be led to execution. *Ἀπάγω* signifies to lead away, and in a judicial sense to lead to execution; hence *ἀπαχθῆναι* in the passive, to be led to execution, to be put to death. Thus Pliny in his celebrated letter to Trajan, speaking of the Christians, says: "When they again confessed, and I had the third time questioned them with threats of punishment, seeing them obstinate, I commanded them to be led away," that is, to be put to death. We are not to think that this was an extraordinary act of cruelty on the part of Herod. A soldier to whom a prisoner was entrusted, and who permitted his escape, was held guilty of a capital offence. Nor is it necessary to suppose that the whole sixteen soldiers were put to death, but only the four who were on guard at the time of the escape.

---

#### ON JAMES THE LORD'S BROTHER.

After the death of James the brother of John, there is frequent mention in the Acts and the Pauline epistles of another James. He was a person of great importance in the Christian church. Peter directs that information of his escape should be sent to him; he presides at the celebrated Council of Jerusalem; mention is made of those who came from James to Antioch; to him Paul repairs on his arrival at Jerusalem; he is called the Lord's brother, and one of the three pillars of the church. Now, besides James the brother of John, there was another James among the apostles, called James the son of Alphæus. The question has been raised whether James "the Lord's brother" was

the same as James the apostle, "the son of Alphæus;" or whether they were different persons.

There are three opinions: 1. That this James "the Lord's brother," who is so prominently mentioned in the Acts and the Pauline epistles, was an apostle, and the cousin of our Lord, the same with James the son of Alphæus. 2. That he was the son of Joseph and Mary, and not one of the original apostles. 3. That he was the son of Joseph by a former marriage, and was therefore called a brother of our Lord.

The first opinion asserts the identity between James "the Lord's brother," and James "the apostle, the son of Alphæus." According to this hypothesis, it is supposed that the word "brother" is used in a lax sense to signify "cousin." The argument by which this opinion is maintained is as follows:—The brethren of Christ are stated to have been James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas (Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3). Now three of these names—James, and Joses, and Judas—are elsewhere mentioned as the names of the sons of Mary, the sister of the Virgin, and the wife of Clopas. We are informed that there stood at the cross of Jesus His mother and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene (John xix. 25); and it is elsewhere said that this Mary, the sister of the Virgin, was the mother of James the Less and Joses (Matt. xxvii. 56; Mark xv. 40): consequently these two—James and Joses—were the cousins of our Lord. Again, it is maintained that Alphæus is in Hebrew the same name as Clopas;<sup>1</sup> so that James the apostle, the son of Alphæus, is the same as the above-mentioned James the cousin of our Lord: and we know that he had a brother named Judas, another of the apostles (Acts i. 13). Hence these children of Clopas, or Alphæus, and Mary the sister of the Virgin—namely, James, and Joses, and Judas—are regarded as the same as those bearing the same names who are mentioned as the brethren of Christ. The names are the same, and to identify them we have only to suppose that the word "brethren" is used in an extended sense so as to include cousins.

<sup>1</sup> Winer's *Wörterbuch*—Alphæus.



This opinion, however, is supported by some doubtful suppositions, rests on arbitrary assumptions, and is liable to several objections. 1. It is doubtful whether Mary the wife of Clopas was the sister of the Virgin. John says: "There stood at the cross of Jesus His mother and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene." Now these words may be read as mentioning four women at the cross: first, our Lord's mother and her sister, whose name is not given; and secondly, Mary the wife of Clopas and Mary Magdalene. On this supposition, the sister of our Lord's mother and Mary the wife of Clopas are different persons. As we learn from the other evangelists that Salome the mother of John was at the cross, some suppose that it was she who is intended by "His mother's sister." Besides, it is very unlikely that the Virgin and her sister would both be called by the same name.<sup>1</sup> It is also doubtful if *Ἰούδας Ἰακώβου* is to be translated "Judas the brother of James," and not rather "Judas the son of James." And it is by no means a certainty that the names Clopas and Alphæus are identical. 2. It is an arbitrary assumption that the word "brethren" here signifies "cousins." The word brethren is frequently used in Scripture in a metaphorical sense, but without any danger of misconception. In only two instances is it used to signify a relationship different from that of a brother. Lot is called the brother of Abraham, and Jacob the brother of Laban, whereas in reality they were merely nephews; but it is never once used to denote cousins.<sup>2</sup> The objection is equally strong in reference to those who are called the sisters of Christ. 3. We are informed by John that "His brethren did not believe on Him" (John vii. 5). But according to the hypothesis that James the Lord's brother was the son of Alphæus, two of these brethren—James and Judas—were at that time apostles. To

<sup>1</sup> According to this supposition, the sons of Mary the wife of Clopas were no relations to Christ; whereas James and John, the sons of Zebedee and Salome, were His full cousins.

<sup>2</sup> If they had been cousins, we would have expected the word *ἀνέψιοι*, and not *ἀδελφοί*.

this objection two answers are given: First, it is not necessary to suppose that John is speaking of all the brethren of Christ, but merely of His brethren in general terms. Or, secondly, the unbelief here adverted to might have been some temporary wavering, to which even the apostles might be liable. 4. The brethren of Christ are several times expressly distinguished from the apostles; as in Acts i. 13, 14, where the apostles are mentioned first, and then the brethren of Christ (see also John ii. 12; 1 Cor. ix. 5). No great weight, however, can be put on this objection taken by itself. These are the chief objections against the opinion that James the brother of the Lord, and James the son of Alphæus, are the same. This is, however, the most general opinion: it was asserted by Papias, Clemens Alexandrinus, Jerome, and Augustin among the Fathers, and is embraced by Calvin, Pearson, Eichhorn, Lampe, Schneckenburger, Gieseler, Lange, Ellicott, and Wordsworth among the moderns.

The second opinion is, that the James of the Acts was not an apostle, and was a real brother of our Lord, being the son of Mary and Joseph. Among the brethren of our Lord, there is mention of a James (Matt. xiii. 55); and Paul speaks of *Ἰάκωβον τὸν ἀδελφὸν τοῦ Κυρίου* — *James the Lord's brother* (Gal. i. 19). According to this hypothesis, these expressions are taken in their natural acceptation. There are, however, difficulties in the way of this conclusion. 1. It is opposed to the general sentiment and universal tradition of the church. Both the Western and Eastern Churches cling to the idea that the Virgin remained always a virgin; hence the name *ἀειπαρθενος* among the Greeks, and *semper Virgo* among the Latins.<sup>1</sup> The grounds of this opinion are well stated by Bishop Pearson in his *Exposition of the Creed*: "We believe the mother of our Lord to have been, not only before and after His nativity, but also for ever, the most immaculate and blessed Virgin. For although it may be thought sufficient as to the mystery of the incarnation, that when our Saviour was conceived and born His mother was a virgin; though

<sup>1</sup> In the Helvetic Confession, Jesus is spoken of as *natus ex Maria, semper virgine*.

whatsoever should have followed after could have no reflective operation upon the first-fruit of her womb; though there be no further mention in the Creed than that He was ‘born of the Virgin Mary;’ yet the peculiar eminency and unparalleled privilege of that mother, the special honour and reverence due unto that Son, and ever paid by her, the regard of that Holy Ghost who came upon her, and the power of the Highest which overshadowed her, the singular goodness and piety of Joseph, to whom she was espoused, have persuaded the church in all ages to believe that she still continued in the same virginity, and therefore is to be acknowledged ‘the ever-virgin Mary.’”<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, those who adopt the opposite opinion hold this to be no argument, but a mere appeal to sentiment, arising from a false notion of the superior sanctity of the unmarried life. (See Luke ii. 7; Matt. i. 25.) 2. It is objected that, if Mary had children of her own, Jesus would not have recommended her to the care of John (John xix. 25–27). We consider this a strong objection. The only answer that has been given to it is, that His brethren did not then believe; but this is a feeble reply, as immediately after His resurrection we find them among the number of the disciples. 3. It is asserted that this James is expressly called an apostle: “Other of the apostles,” says Paul, “saw I none, save James the Lord’s brother” (Gal. i. 19). To this two answers are given. First, it is said that the words do not imply that James was an apostle, but may be thus read: “I saw none other of the apostles, but only (I saw) James the Lord’s brother.” This, however, is not so natural and obvious an interpretation. It is also apparently opposed to Acts ix. 27, where it is said of the same visit, that “Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles;” from which it would follow that Peter and James, the only two whom he then saw, were both apostles. Secondly, it is said that the word *ἀπόστολος* is not confined to the twelve, but is applied not only to Paul, but also to Barnabas (Acts xiv. 14). This lax sense of the term, however, hardly suits Paul’s argument, and is certainly not the obvious meaning in

<sup>1</sup> Pearson on the Creed—Article iii.

the passage (Gal. i. 17-19). 4. James is here introduced by Luke without any designation: now, with the exception of James the brother of John, who had just been slain, the only other James known to his readers, and whom he had already mentioned (Acts i. 13), was James the son of Alphæus; and therefore, it is argued, it is more natural to suppose that he meant this James than a James unknown to his readers. 5. It is objected that, by supposing James to be the actual son of the Virgin Mary, you would introduce two sets of the same names—James, Joses, and Judas—as sons of the Virgin Mary, and sons of Mary the wife of Clopas. Not much, however, can be made of this objection, as these names were among the most common Jewish names; and, as already stated, it is a somewhat doubtful supposition that the Apostles James and Judas were brothers.

The opinion that James was the son of Mary and Joseph was first started toward the close of the fourth century by a certain Helvidius, whose followers were called Helvidians or Antidicomarianitæ, and were universally regarded as heretics. *Antidicomarianitæ appellati sunt hæretici, qui Mariæ virginitati usque adeo contradicunt, ut affirmant eam post Christum natum viro suo fuisse commixtam* (Augustine). The opinion was condemned by the sixth General Council. It has since been revived and embraced by Meyer, Lechler, Neander, Wieseler, Stier, Alford, and Davidson among the moderns.

The third opinion is, that James and the other brethren and the sisters of our Lord were the children of Joseph by a former marriage, and were, on account of this relationship, regarded as His brethren and sisters. No positive arguments can be adduced in favour of this opinion: however, it is exposed to no great objections, and it avoids some of the difficulties which beset the other two theories. It accounts for these disciples being called the brethren of Jesus; it lessens the objection arising from Christ recommending His mother to the care of John;<sup>1</sup> and it does no violence to the universal sentiment of the church concerning the perpetual

<sup>1</sup> Especially if John were the full cousin of Christ, and the nephew of the Virgin. See above.



virginity of Mary. Nevertheless it has not been favourably received in modern times, and has gained few supporters, probably because it savours too much of a mere arbitrary supposition adopted to avoid difficulties, and is destitute of positive arguments in its favour. It is not, however, necessarily erroneous, and we do not think ought to be summarily dismissed. It was the favourite opinion of the early Fathers, being held by Origen, Eusebius, Gregory of Nyssa, Cyril of Alexandria, Epiphanius, Hilary, Victorinus, and Ambrose; and has become the generally received opinion of the Greek Church.<sup>1</sup>

Such are the three opinions concerning James the brother of our Lord. The third opinion is the least supported. The great objection to the first opinion is, that some disciples are actually called the brothers and sisters of Christ. And the great objection to the second opinion, is the difficulty of reconciling it with John xix. 25-27 and Gal. i. 19. It is a perplexing question; it is hard to say on what side the preponderance of evidence lies; and we feel constrained to leave the matter *in dubio*. Happily it is a question of small doctrinal importance, though of considerable interest.<sup>2</sup>

James, the brother of our Lord, is frequently mentioned in the history of the church. He is there known by the

<sup>1</sup> This opinion is also maintained by Cave in his *Lives of the Apostles*. Lardner concludes his learned dissertation by leaving it in doubt whether James was the son of Joseph by a former wife, or a relation of the Virgin Mary. He, however, maintains that he is the same as the Apostle James, the son of Alphæus. There is a modification of this opinion, which supposes these brethren of Christ to have been the adopted children of Joseph, being the sons of his brother Clopas, or Alphæus.

<sup>2</sup> This interesting question is discussed at length in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, articles "the Brethren of Christ," and "James the Lord's Brother;" Winer's *biblisches Wörterbuch*, article "Jacobus;" Pearson *on the Creed*—Article iii.; Lange's *Life of Christ*, vol. i. 421-437, Clark's translation; Neander's *Planting*, vol. i. 350-354; Schaff's *Apostolic History*, vol. ii. pp. 35-38; Alford's *Introduction to the Epistle of James*; Lardner's *Works*, vol. iii. pp. 368-384; Davidson's *New Introduction*, vol. i. pp. 281-284; Wordsworth *on the Acts*, pp. 99, 100; Andrew's *Life of our Lord*, pp. 97-108.

name of Bishop of Jerusalem ; and certainly, if not actually bishop, it would appear from the Acts of the Apostles that he at least exercised an important influence in the mother church. A long account of his character and death, written by Hegesippus, who lived about the middle of the second century, is preserved by Eusebius. He informs us that he was universally known by the name of the Just, and along with the apostles received the government of the church. He lived as a Nazarite : he drank neither wine nor strong drink, and no razor came upon his head. He was in the habit of entering the temple alone, and was often found upon his bended knees, interceding for the forgiveness of his people ; so that his knees became as hard as camels', in consequence of his habitual supplication before God. He was put to death, shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem, by the fanatical Jews. His last words were : " I entreat Thee, O Lord God and Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do." " Thus," concludes Hegesippus, " he suffered martyrdom, on the spot where his tombstone is still remaining, by the temple. He was a faithful witness, both to the Jews and to the Greeks, that Jesus is the Christ. Immediately after this, Vespasian invaded and took Judea" (Euseb. ii. 23). Josephus also gives a similar account of his martyrdom. He tells us that he was put to death by the high priest Ananus, during a vacancy in the Roman procuratorship, after the death of Festus, and before his successor Albinus had arrived in Judea. " Ananus," he writes, " assembled the Sanhedrim, and brought before them the brother of Jesus who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some of his companions ; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned" (*Ant.* xx. 9. 1). According to this account, James was martyred in the year 63, shortly before the commencement of the Jewish war.

## SECTION XXVI.

DEATH OF HEROD.—ACTS XII. 19–25.

19 And having gone down from Judea to Cæsarea, he remained there. 20 And he was greatly enraged against the Tyrians and Sidonians : but they came with one accord to him, and having conciliated Blastus the king's chamberlain, they requested peace ; because their country was nourished by the king's country. 21 And on an appointed day, Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon a throne, and made an oration to them. 22 And the people cried out, The voice of a god, and not of a man. 23 And immediately an angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not the glory to God : and being eaten of worms, he expired.

24 But the word of God grew and multiplied. 25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, having fulfilled their ministry, taking with them John, who was surnamed Mark.

### CRITICAL NOTE.

Ver. 20. After ἦν δέ the *textus receptus* has ὁ Ἑρώδης, with E. The words are wanting in A, B, D, κ, and are rejected by all recent critics. They were probably inserted because ver. 20 begins a new section describing the death of Herod.

### EXEGETICAL REMARKS.

Ver. 19. Καὶ κατελθὼν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰουδαίας εἰς τὴν Καισάρειαν—*And having gone down from Judea to Cæsarea.* Εἰς τὴν Καισάρειαν does not here stand for ἐν τῇ Καισάρειᾳ (Kuinoel), but is grammatically connected with κατελθὼν (Winer's *Grammar*, p. 434). For a description of Cæsarea, see note to Acts viii. 40. Cæsarea, when Judea was subject to the Romans, was the residence of the Roman procurator ; but it was now attached to the kingdom of Herod Agrippa,

and formed the northern part of his dominions. Josephus expressly mentions that Claudius added Judea, Samaria, and Cæsarea to the other dominions of Agrippa (*Ant.* xix. 8. 2). The usual residence of this prince was Jerusalem; but he resided occasionally in Cæsarea, the second city of his kingdom. It was more a Gentile than a Jewish city. The object of this visit to Cæsarea is not stated by Luke. Some suppose that it was from vexation on account of the escape of Peter; because he was prevented fulfilling the promise made to the Jews, in bringing forth Peter unto the people (ver. 4). Josephus tells us that it was to celebrate games in honour of Claudius Cæsar, and that great numbers of persons of rank and distinction resorted to Cæsarea on this occasion (*Ant.* xix. 8. 2).

Ver. 20. Ἦν δὲ θυμομαχῶν Τυρίοις καὶ Σιδωνίοις—and he was greatly enraged against the Tyrians and Sidonians. *Θυμομαχῶν* is not to be taken in the sense either that he waged war, or that he intended to wage war; for an actual war with the cities of Tyre and Sidon, which were then subject to the Romans, and constituted a part of the province of Syria, is not to be thought of, and is historically unknown. The word is to be taken in a qualified sense, as meaning that Herod was greatly enraged—*highly displeased*, as it is in our English version. Herod probably showed his displeasure by putting restrictions on the commerce of Tyre and Sidon, preventing them obtaining supplies from Judea, and closing his ports against them. It was because their country was nourished by the king's country, that the Tyrians and Sidonians desired peace. Perhaps also the signs of the famine which next year attacked Judea were already apparent, and made it the more necessary to procure supplies. The occasion of this difference between Herod and the Phœnicians is unknown; but probably it was something connected with commerce, as Cæsarea had now become the rival of Tyre and Sidon. Years before this, in a dispute between the Sidonians and the inhabitants of Damascus about the limits of their respective territories, Herod was bribed by the Damascenes to use his influence in their favour with Flaccus,



the governor of Syria (Joseph. *Ant.* xviii. 6. 3); so that it is probable there may have been always a want of amity between him and the Phœnicians. *Παρήσαν πρὸς αὐτόν*—*they came to him*; namely, by means of deputies from both cities. *Καὶ πείσαντες Βλάστον*—*and having conciliated Blastus*, probably by means of a bribe. Blastus is a Roman name; and Herod being long resident in Rome, it is not improbable that he would have a Roman as his chief steward. *Τὸν ἐπὶ τοῦ κοιτῶνος τοῦ βασιλέως*—*the king's chamberlain*; literally, "him who was over the king's bed-chamber"—*præfectus cubiculo* (Suetonius, *Domitian*, xvi.)—perhaps treasurer, finance minister of the king. *Ἦτοῦντο εἰρήνην*—*they desired peace*. Peace is not here opposed to war, but to alienation—reconciliation. *Διὰ τὸ τρέφεσθαι αὐτῶν τὴν χώραν*, etc.—*because their country was nourished by that of the king*. Phœnicia being a district of narrow limits, depended upon the adjoining countries for its supplies of grain. It seems from the days of Solomon to have been specially dependent on Palestine (1 Kings v. 11). Ezekiel, in his description of the merchandise of Tyre, says that Judah and the land of Israel were her merchants, and traded with her in wheat, and honey, and oil, and balm (Ezek. xxvii. 17). Besides, Judea must have been one of the principal countries where the Phœnicians disposed of their goods. The splendid harbour of Cæsarea also must have been most convenient for their numerous ships. It was therefore their policy to live on good terms with Herod Agrippa, as it was in his power to cripple their trade, and to stint them in their supplies of grain.

Ver. 21. *Τακτῇ δὲ ἡμέρᾳ*—*And on an appointed day*. According to Josephus, this day was the second day of the games celebrated in honour of Claudius; and the place of assembly was the theatre of Cæsarea. *Ἐνδυσάμενος ἐσθήτα βασιλικήν*—*clothed in royal apparel*. Josephus makes express mention of this royal garment: *στολὴν ἐνδυσάμενος ἐξ ἀργυρίου πεποιημένην πᾶσαν*—*clothed in a robe entirely made of silver* (*Ant.* xix. 8. 2). *Καθίσας ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος*—*sat upon the throne*. *Βῆμα* (in Latin, *suggestus*) is the ele-

vated seat in the theatre set apart for the king, from which he might look at the games or address the assembly. Ἐδημηγόρει πρὸς αὐτούς—*made an oration to them.* Δημηγορέω, to harangue in a public assembly; πρὸς αὐτούς, not to the assembly, but to the deputation from Tyre and Sidon, to whom he granted a public audience, and to whose requests he graciously acceded, as is evident from the acclamations which followed his address. There is a variety of opinion with regard to the season of the year when this occurred. Josephus says that the games were celebrated in honour of the emperor for his safety: εἰς τὴν Καίσαρος τιμὴν ὑπὲρ τῆς ἐκείνου σωτηρίας. Accordingly Anger thinks that they were in honour of the safe return of Claudius from his expedition to Britain, and occurred in the month of April or May, shortly after the passover of the year 44. Wieseler controverts this opinion, and supposes that it was the festival of the Quinquennialia, instituted by Herod the Great in honour of Augustus, and celebrated on the first of August.<sup>1</sup> There was probably only a short interval between the passover and Herod's death.

Ver. 22. Ὁ δὲ δῆμος—and the people. Δῆμος (not λαός, vers. 4, 11), the assembled people. We cannot suppose that this assembly was composed of Jews, and that they uttered this profane flattery. Cæsarea, as already observed, was a Gentile city, and therefore the audience were chiefly Gentiles; and the words are appropriate enough in the lips of idolaters. Θεοῦ φωνὴ καὶ οὐκ ἀνθρώπου—literally, *God's voice, and not man's.* Only, as proceeding from Gentiles, θεοῦ does not here refer to the Supreme Being, but is to be taken indefinitely—"a god's voice," or "the voice of a god."

Ver. 23. Ἐπάταξεν αὐτὸν ἄγγελος Κυρίου—an angel of the Lord smote him. The sudden attack of disease is represented as a divine punishment, inflicted by the instrumentality of an angel. There was no visible appearance of an angel—nothing to cause the audience to suspect his interposition, except that the disease attacked Herod at the very

<sup>1</sup> Wieseler's *Chronologie des apostolischen Zeitalters*, pp. 132-136.

moment when he was receiving their impious flatteries: we only learn from the evangelist the fact that it was an angel who smote Herod. The idea of inspiration does not permit us to suppose, with De Wette, that this is a mere accommodation to the superstitions of the Jews, who attributed any great calamities which befell their enemies, or any great judgment inflicted on themselves, to angels (2 Sam. xxiv. 17; 2 Kings xix. 35). It is the evident doctrine of Scripture, that the angels are the instruments with which Providence works—the ministers of Christ: the messengers (ἄγγελοι) of mercy, as in the case of the deliverance of Peter; or of vengeance, as in the case of the death of Herod. *Angelus Domini eduxit Petrum; Angelus Domini percussit Herodem* (Bengel).

Ἀνθ' ὧν οὐκ ἔδωκεν τὴν δόξαν τῷ Θεῷ—because he gave not God the glory. It was Herod's vanity—his love of popular applause, a ruling passion of his life—that was the cause of his destruction; "Not because of Peter, but because of his arrogant speaking" (Chrysostom). Baumgarten allegorizes this account of the punishment inflicted on Herod. He supposes that Herod here represents the world's ruler in his conflict with the kingdom of God; and that Nimrod and Nebuchadnezzar were also similar representatives. "It is," he observes, "not for one moment to be doubted that, by this sudden stroke, which transmuted the god Herod into a mortal man, it is intended that we should be reminded of the fate of Nebuchadnezzar."<sup>1</sup> The resemblance between Nebuchadnezzar, who was certainly the ruler of the world in his day, and Herod Agrippa, a dependent prince of a small province, is too slight to warrant such fanciful notions. Sacred history is not thus to be converted into an allegory.

Καὶ γενόμενος σκωληκόβρωτος—and being eaten of worms. Luke, "the beloved physician," here gives a more exact description of the disease of which Herod died than Josephus, who merely says, γαστρὸς ἀλγήμασι διεργασθείς. This disease

<sup>1</sup> Baumgarten's *Apostolic History*, vol. i. pp. 317–329.

is one of the most horrible to which human nature is liable, and is thought to be reserved by God for tyrants and persecutors. The examples of it recorded in history are rare, and nearly the whole of those who were attacked by it were infamous for their cruelties. Antiochus Epiphanes, the great persecutor of the Jews (2 Macc. ix. 5–9); Pheretima, a queen of the Cyrenians notorious for her cruelties (Herod. iv. 305); Herod the Great (Joseph. *Ant.* xvii. 6. 5); Claudius Lucius Herminianus, governor of Cappadocia, a cruel persecutor (Tertullian, *Ad Scapulam*); and the Emperor Galerius, of infamous memory (Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* viii. 16), are all said to have died of this disease. It is the observation of Niebuhr, a man not of a superstitious, but rather of a sceptical turn of mind, in describing the death of Sylla, that “this disease for the most part occurs among tyrants, as Philip II., the Jewish king Herod, and Antiochus Epiphanes.”<sup>1</sup>

*Ἐξέψυξεν*—*he expired*. Herod, as Josephus informs us, died in the fifty-fourth year of his age, and in the seventh of his reign, after having reigned three years over the tetrarchies of Philip and Lysanias alone, one year over these tetrarchies with the addition of Galilee, and only three years over all Palestine. His death did not occur immediately after he was smitten with disease, but he lingered for five days, suffering excruciating torments. Wieseler thinks that the exact day of his death may be determined. He judges that the games which he celebrated in honour of Claudius were the Quinquennalia, which commenced on the first of August. He was attacked by disease on the second day of the games, and lingered five days, so that his death occurred on 6th August 44.<sup>2</sup> Herod Agrippa left four children: one son, Agrippa, then seventeen, the Agrippa of the Acts, before whom Paul made his defence; and three daughters,—the eldest Bernice, then married to her uncle Herod, the king of Chalcis, afterwards mentioned along with her brother (Acts xxv. 13); and the others, Mariamne, then ten years

<sup>1</sup> Niebuhr's *Vorträge über romische Geschichte*, vol. ii. p. 386.

<sup>2</sup> Wieseler's *Chronologie*, p. 136.



of age, and Drusilla, six, afterwards the wife of Felix (Acts xxiv. 24), (Joseph. *Ant.* xix. 9. 1).

It is instructive and interesting to compare Luke's account of the death of Herod Agrippa with that of Josephus. Agrippa, Josephus observes, when he had reigned three years over all Judea, came to Cæsarea, and there exhibited games in honour of Claudius Cæsar, at which a great number of the principal persons of the province were present. On the second day of the games, he put on a garment made wholly of silver, and came into the theatre early in the morning; at which time the silver of his garment, being illuminated with the rays of the rising sun, shone in a dazzling manner: and presently his flatterers cried out that he was a god; and they added, "Be gracious to us; for although we have hitherto revered thee only as a man, yet shall we henceforth own thee as superior to mortal nature." The king did neither rebuke nor reject their impious flattery. But as he immediately afterwards looked up, he saw an owl sitting on a rope above his head, and immediately understood that this bird was the messenger of evil tidings, as it had once been the messenger of good tidings: and he fell into the deepest sorrow. Soon afterwards he was seized with exquisite torments in his bowels; and forthwith he addressed the audience: "I, whom you call a god, am commanded presently to depart this life. Providence thus reprove the lying words you just now addressed to me; and I, who was by you called immortal, am immediately to be hurried away by death. But I am bound to accept what Providence allots; for we have had our day, and lived in no little splendour." As he said this, the pain became more violent; and he was carried into his palace, where, after suffering violent agonies for five days, he expired (*Ant.* xix. 8. 2).

The account of Josephus confirms and illustrates the narrative given us by Luke. It agrees with it in the following points:—Both accounts tell us that the death of Herod happened in Cæsarea, where he had arrived shortly before; that

the first attack of his illness took place in a public assembly, before which he appeared in full state, arrayed in a magnificent dress; that immediately before the attack, the multitude flattered him in an impious manner, saluting him as if he were a god; that the king neither rejected nor discouraged the idolatrous flattery; and that shortly afterwards he expired in excruciating pain. It is also observable that both Luke and Josephus agree in representing his illness as a divine judgment for not rejecting the flattery of the multitude.

The points of difference between the two accounts are few and unimportant. 1. Josephus makes no mention of the embassy from Tyre and Sidon, nor does Luke of the games in honour of Claudius. It is probable that both circumstances took place, and that it was on the second day of the celebration of these games that Herod in full state gave a public audience to the Phœnician ambassadors. 2. Josephus makes no mention of the angel who smote the king, nor does Luke of the owl which sat above his head. But in Luke's narrative no appearance of the angel is implied; and the owl is doubtless a superstitious addition. Josephus had already mentioned that, when Herod was a prisoner at Rome, an owl sat on a tree on which he leant; and that a German soothsayer indicated to him that this owl was a messenger of good tidings, but that if he saw the bird again he would only live five days longer (*Ant.* xviii. 6. 7). Eusebius converts the owl which, according to Josephus, Herod recognised as a messenger of evil tidings (ἄγγελος κακῶν), into the angel of the Acts, the messenger of the Lord (ἄγγελος Κυρίου). Professing to quote Josephus, he says, "The king, raising himself, saw an angel sitting above his head" (*Hist. Eccl.* ii. 10); an unfortunate and most unjustifiable attempt at reconciliation. 3. Josephus says that Herod, after being smitten with disease, lingered for five days; whereas Luke simply states that he was eaten of worms, and expired. But in Luke's narrative it is not implied that he expired in the assembly: for all that is there stated, there might have been an interval between the stroke and the death. 4. As to the disease of

which he died, there is no great difference: Josephus asserts that he suffered violent pains in his bowels; and Luke describes it more definitely—that he was eaten of worms. There is surely here no contradiction, and therefore it is wholly superfluous in Baur to have recourse to his mythical explanation: that the worms have reference to the gnawing worm which preys on the condemned, and that the death of Herod is so described to resemble the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, the king so hateful to the Jews, the cruel persecutor of all the true worshippers of God, the enemy of the true religion, who in his pride compared himself to the supreme God.<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 24. Ὁ δὲ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡύξανε καὶ ἐπληθύνετο—but the word of God grew and multiplied. Δέ—but—in contrast to the tragical end of the persecutor. Herod is eaten of worms, but the word of God progressed. After the death of Herod, the persecution ceased; and the gospel could again be preached and propagated without danger: the restraints in the way of its progress were removed.

Ver. 25. Βαρνάβας δὲ καὶ Σαῦλος—and Barnabas and Saul. Barnabas here takes the precedence of Paul, because he was still the principal person. “Luke still mentions Barnabas first; for Paul was not yet famous—he had not yet wrought any sign” (Chrysostom). Ὑπέστρεψαν—returned, namely to Antioch. Ἐξ Ἱερουσαλήμ—from Jerusalem. This verse is connected with Acts xi. 30, where we are told that Barnabas and Saul were sent with the alms of the disciples of Antioch to Judea; and it is introductory to the next chapter, where mention is made of their presence in the church which was at Antioch. Πληρώσαντες τὴν διακονίαν—having fulfilled their ministry. Meyer supposes that Barnabas and Paul first visited the churches of Judea, and went to Jerusalem last; so that the execution of James, and the imprisonment and deliverance of Peter in Jerusalem, and the death of Herod in Cæsarea, occurred when Paul and Barnabas were in Judea, before they came to Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> But it

<sup>1</sup> Baur's *Paulus*, vol. i. p. 183. <sup>2</sup> Meyer's *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 256.

is most probable that they did not commence their journey until after the death of Herod, for it was not until then that the famine commenced. Their residence in Jerusalem would be short and unimportant, for Paul makes no mention of it in his Epistle to the Galatians. Συμπαλαβόντες Ἰωάννην τὸν ἐπικληθέντα Μάρκον—*taking with them John, who was surnamed Mark*: Mark, already mentioned, the son of Mary, in whose house the disciples were assembled, and the nephew or cousin of Barnabas. (See note to Acts xii. 12.) Probably his relationship to Barnabas was one of the chief reasons which induced them to take him.





## OTHER FINE VOLUMES AVAILABLE

1979 - 80



0201	Murphy, James G.	COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF EXODUS	11.50
1901	Dickson, David	A COMMENTARY ON THE PSALMS (2 vol.)	26.50
2301	Kelly, William	AN EXPOSITION OF THE BOOK OF ISAIAH	11.95
2601	Fairbairn, Patrick	AN EXPOSITION OF EZEKIEL	14.95
3801	Wright, Charles H.H.	ZECHARIAH AND HIS PROPHECIES	19.95
4101	Alexander, Joseph	COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF MARK	13.95
4401	Alexander, Joseph	COMMENTARY ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES (2 Vol.)	24.95
4402	Gloag, Paton J.	A CRITICAL AND EXEGETICAL COMMENTARY ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES	24.95
4602	Edwards, Thomas C.	A COMMENTARY ON THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS	14.75
5601	Taylor, Thomas	AN EXPOSITION OF TITUS	15.95
5802	Bruce, Alexander B.	THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS	13.75
7002	Alford, Dean Henry	THE BOOK OF GENESIS AND PART OF THE BOOK OF EXODUS	10.25
7003	Marbury, Edward	OBADIAH AND HABAKKUK	19.50
7103	Hort, F.J.A.	EXPOSITORY AND EXEGETICAL STUDIES	18.95
7104	Milligan, George	ST. PAUL'S EPISTLES TO THE THESSALONIANS	9.50
8601	Shedd, W.G.T.	DOGMATIC THEOLOGY (4 Vol.)	44.95
8703	Kurtz, John Henry	SACRIFICIAL WORSHIP OF THE OLD TESTAMENT	13.75
8901	Fawcett, John	CHRIST PRECIOUS TO THOSE THAT BELIEVE	8.50
9401	Neal, Daniel	HISTORY OF THE PURITANS (3 Vol.)	49.95
9802	Pink, Arthur W.	THE ANTICHRIST	9.50
9803	Shedd, W.G.T.	THE DOCTRINE OF ENDLESS PUNISHMENT	7.50
TITLES CURRENTLY AVAILABLE			
0101	Delitzsch, Franz	A NEW COMMENTARY ON GENESIS (2 Vol.)	24.25
0301	Kellogg, Samuel H.	THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS	17.25
0601	Blaikie, William G.	THE BOOK OF JOSHUA	12.75
0901	Blaikie, William G.	THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL	12.25
1001	Blaikie, William G.	THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL	12.25
1801	Gibson, Edgar	THE BOOK OF JOB	8.75
1802	Green, William H.	THE ARGUMENT OF THE BOOK OF JOB UNFOLDED	9.75
2401	Orelli, Hans C. von	THE PROPHECIES OF JEREMIAH	12.25
2701	Pusey, Edward B.	DANIEL THE PROPHET	18.25
4301	Brown, John	THE INTERCESSORY PRAYER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST	9.50
4501	Shedd, W.G.T.	CRITICAL AND DOCTRINAL COMMENTARY ON ROMANS	14.25
4601	Brown, John	THE RESURRECTION OF LIFE	11.95
4801	Ramsay, William	HISTORICAL COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS	14.25
4901	Westcott, Brooke F.	ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS	8.75
5001	Johnstone, Robert	LECTURES ON THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS	14.95
5401	Liddon, Henry P.	THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY	5.50
5801	Delitzsch, Franz	COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS (2 Vol.)	27.50
5901	Johnstone, Robert	LECTURES ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES	12.75
5902	Mayor, Joseph B.	THE EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES	17.50
6501	Manton, Thomas	AN EXPOSITION OF THE EPISTLE OF JUDE	10.95
6601	Trench, Richard C.	COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES	7.75
7001	Orelli, Hans C. von	THE TWELVE MINOR PROPHETS	12.25
7101	Mayor, Joseph B.	THE EPISTLE OF ST. JUDE & THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER	13.75
7102	Lillie, John	LECTURES ON THE FIRST AND SECOND EPISTLES OF PETER	16.50
8001	Fairweather, William	BACKGROUND OF THE GOSPELS	13.75
8002	Fairweather, William	BACKGROUND OF THE EPISTLES	12.75
8003	Zahn, Theodor	INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT (3 Vol.)	43.95
8004	Bernard, Thomas	THE PROGRESS OF DOCTRINE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT	8.25
8701	Shedd, W.G.T.	HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE (2 Vol.)	27.50
8702	Oehler, Gustave	THEOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT	18.25
9501	Schilder, Klass	THE TRILOGY (3 Vol.)	43.95
9801	Liddon, Henry P.	THE DIVINITY OF OUR LORD	18.50









